

Esquire

A man with short grey hair, wearing a tan suit, white shirt, and striped tie, stands with his arms outstretched to the sides. He is standing on a small patch of sand in the middle of a body of water under a blue sky with white clouds.

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

APRIL 1996

STEVE NEEDS

MARTIN A HUG

BY MARTHA SHERRILL

DANIEL VOLL

Nazis in the Army
—The Inside Story

MARK KRAM

At Home with
Mike Tyson

MIKE LUPICA

Magic Johnson in
Double Overtime

WALTER SHAPIRO

Anonymous on the
Run with Bob Dole

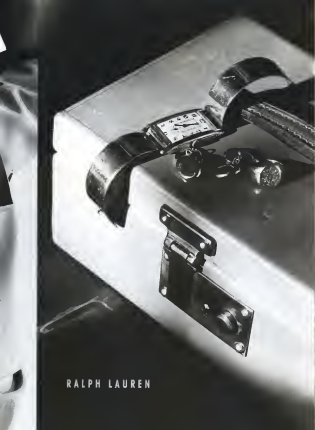
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THE
PLAYGROUND FOR
THE
UNIMAGINATIVE**



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CHARMANT BICCARA PUNCH ALLURE

WE Strong
as a Lion



Proper
THE SHOE

T O M M Y

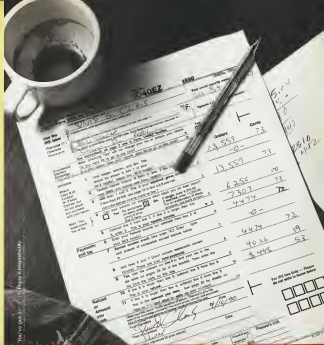


H I L F I G E R

The easy route is
no longer an option.
Cheers.



Dewar's





(COVER) STYLING BY GABRIEL CORREIA FOR FRANKS REYNOLDS; (THIS PAGE) STYLING BY JESSICA BENTON; (BY TOWERS) STYLING BY JESSICA BENTON; (BY MURRAY) STYLING BY JESSICA BENTON; (BY MURRAY) STYLING BY JESSICA BENTON

Mister Lonely Hearts

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BY MARTHA SWERRELL

Single white comedian, fifty, in search of walfish librarian type. Must like art and be able to explain the theory of relativity in one sentence. Contact Steve Martin.



The Tiger King

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BY MARK KRAM

As the ex-heavyweight champion fights for his place in history, he reflects on life in prison, his man-eating pets, and the courage of Wayne Newton.

Sorcery, Sunsets, Corpses, and Whores

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BY JOHN TAYLOR

From civilization to chaos and back: One man's journey up the Congo leads to enlightenment.



Of Ice and Men

96

BY MICHAEL ANGELO

It's been two years since a spritely Oksana Baiul captured Olympic gold. Now she's all grown up, and life is a whirl of club



hopping, modeling, and, oh yes, skating. You've come a long way, *deemishka*.

A Few Good Nazis

102

BY DANIEL VOLL

For years, a pack of soldiers at Fort Bragg proudly displayed their swastikas. Why did it take the murder of a black couple for the Army to notice its little white-supremacist problem?

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Reality Check

Howard Stern's fetishes explained, Punch Sulzberger's alleged "heir," Joe Eszterhas's screenwriting perks, Arianna Huffington's herbal remedy, and more. By Jeannette Walls

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Esky

The very last word on nasty wine talk, Shania Twain, home-made guns, guy musicals. Plus: the Big Page, books, San Francisco, fries, and one muley ride. 28



The Male Animal

What you need to know about skydiving, super sneakers, safe sex, the old-sofie syndrome, the health benefits of white wine, keeping abreast of marijuana use, and how to loosen your hamstrings. 50



Gentleman

Milan Report The seventies, only better—a return to fine tailoring with an edge. By Woody Hochswender 115

Career Moves The new wrinkle in linen is no wrinkles: sleek, suave looks that will help you keep your cool. Photographs by Troy Wood 118



The Modernists With slim, tapered suits and fitted shirts, three designers who have an eye for style bring us the shapes of things to come. Photographs by Manuela Pavesi 124



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Calvin Klein
eyewear

Dubiously Yours

WHAT THE HELL JUST happened the most dubious prize won your pouting. The *Brooklyn Daily* on your mock New York Times best-seller list—an award in a sea of O.J.-related books (Dubious Achievement Awards, January). It took me a while to laugh, and when I was done, I wept for all humanity. The issue makes last year almost worth it and nearly redeems your magazine's cheaterlike factor.

—SABRA STONE
Los Angeles, Calif.

I LOVED YOUR Dubious Achievement Awards. I love you not only for what

you've done for me but for what you've done for hundreds of thousands of dairy farmers like me. I'm referring to your Divine Brown milked parody. Man, did she look like a milk drinker or what? I bought two items, cut the picture out, and stuck one up at each end of the milking shed. Production's up, spirits are up, and I'm up—which may be more than Hugh Grant can say.

—A. C. McDONALD
Arroyo, Ill.

WHAT NOT FEATURE the real three hundred-pound Divine: the lindie queen extraordinaire? At least the ad would have been truly funny, not just a cheap self-promotion for Los Angeles promoter Hugh Grant got a lot of free publicity from all of this—a naive Enghelshman looking for a blow job on Sunset Boulevard. "Divine" Divine Brown must have died and gone to heaven after performing this trick. Are you guys ever going to outgrow your Harvard Redcliffe privileged view of the world?

—PETER GEORGE WHITE
Belmont, N.J.

PERHAPS I'M BEING overly sensitive, but I cannot help but notice the annual tradition we Canadians have received in the Dubious Achievement issue over the past few years. Okay, Canadians by nature are not overly exciting types. We like our social and political prob-

lems with Quebec, our safe and clean streets, our comfortable, if monotonous, customer. But absolutely nothing gets our caffeine fixations in a twist more than sanctimonious Yankees yucking it up at our expense. So, on behalf of my fellow citizens: Toke, cars n. etc?

—CHARLIE J. KEEFFE
Ottawa, Ontario

I AM VERY UPSET over the picture you printed of Hillary Clinton. She didn't realize her skirt was a little too high. As our First Lady, she deserves to be treated with respect. You should be ashamed of yourselves, and you owe her an apology.

—JEANNE TOLLE
Bedford, Ont.



WHILE SOME of your choices for Dubious Achievement Awards were singled out for well-deserved ridicule, I was appalled that you vilified Mississippi by implying that Mississippians are so inherently racist that they only recently decided

to abolish slavery. Mississippi voted to end slavery in that state on August 14, 1865, in state convention, before the United States Congress voted to abolish slavery in December of that year with the Thirteenth Amendment. Mississippi should be commended for bringing about the abolition of slavery months before the so-called emancipation, and the state deserves an apology.

—GRACE E. A. FOWDA
Bryn Mawr, Pa.

EDITOR'S NOTE: At a stroke of the Oedipal Mississippi passed the 1865 measure that the state did not ratify the Thirteenth Amendment until 1890. S. Chomman and L.J. van der

YOUR MOCK GRANT about the Citadel would have been more entertaining if it were true. Many young men, after having been appointed to West Point or Annapolis, opt to attend the Citadel because it is a much more downscale school. My family is a West Point/Cadet family so we had the chance to compare. And comparing a nonsyllable line ("We couldn't make West Point") with an eleven-syllable line ("I'll not for this here unaccustomed joint") weakens

the stylistic standards of even bath-room-proliferationist Colting the Citadel "seemingly," which obviously is, would be only a small improvement.

—STEPHEN R. HAWKINS
Chelmsford, S.C.

I WOULD APPRECIATE knowing your original news source on Annabel Chong, who claims the world record for the most casual portraits in a single day. Where and when did this event take place? What is Chong's major in school—physical education? What was the previous record holder? Who was photographed the event? Was this event sponsored by an organization such as a college fraternity or sorority, or a women's magazine such as *Playboy*? Or was it the brainchild of Chong? And, finally, what did Chong's family think about her new world record?

—DOMINIAN DAKES
Plover, Wis.

What About Bob?

TO JUDGE THAT Bob Kerrey's failings on the 1992 campaign were the fault of his consultants ("Grave Doubts" by Martin Sherrill, January) is simply to deny reality. Consultants can neither create nor destroy good candidates—good candidates make good consultants. Kerrey was a failure on the presidential trail in 1992, and there's no reason to believe he would be any better prepared in the future. As a presidential candidate, Bob Kerrey was simply outclassed by someone he views as unworthy of the job. The odds are money he now fears the president's attempts to help more than sour grapes. In 1992, Bob Kerrey had his chance to put up. Now it's time to shut up.

—TED SMALL
Naples, Mass.

THE THING of Martin Sherrill's informative article on Bob Kerrey was clearly the contrast between the senator—the dream presidential candidate who is such too good and virtuous to occupy the Oval Office—and the loser who currently inhabits also Pennsylvania Avenue. I did not react as Sherrill would be more reminded of two pieces of ancient wisdom: The first is from the Roman historian Tacitus,







nautica

THE SOUND AND THE FURY

resulting, the emperor whom "the common consensus thought qualified to rule—till he started ruling." The other was G.K. Chesterton's summary of Thomas Carlyle's view of protagonists of the French Revolution. He guessed that Robespierre, however despised and discredited, had something sturdy inside him. He guessed that Lafayette, however brave and victorious, had nothing inside him."

—DAVID DREWER
Beltsville, Md.

In the Sorta

DANIEL FREEMAN'S concern ("Downward Mobility," January) that chlorinated hydrocarbons in the air and water have caused his penis to shrink and sperm count to drop is fairly typical of what pains for natural thought among an alarmed classed, post smoking, crack smoking, weed, In-cantay, obese, and chemically assisted generation of contemporary intellectuals. I doubt that Freud's DNA contribution to the gene pool will be missed. Besides, if an industrial accident were to render young men sterile, then old men like me would be ready to ingenerate viable young women whose biological clocks tickle.

—JOHN D. GRIFFITH
Haines, Tex.

IN OCTOBER 1995, our local newspaper, *The Chronicle*, ran a column exposing the recently completed door window. It was noted that the most unusual title of the season had been a seven point door. Perhaps that is another statistic to add to Freud's disturbing article.

—S. M. KANE
Crescent Hill

THANKS FOR exposing the industry and its attitude on sperm over the last fifty years. One hopes this information will make people realize that we have to join together to stop our exposure to dioxins and PCBs. However your article doesn't tell about any of the ongoing strategies that can be used to end this exposure. *As Cancer's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste*, we just published a book entitled *Dying from Dioxin* which is dedicated to part to organizing and motivating people to fight dioxin exposure.

—LOU MARIE GIBBS
Pitts Church, Va.

Oliver Stoned

I WAS INCREDIBLY SURPRISED that Gerry Willis showed some objectivity in his appraisal of Nixon and of director Oliver Stone ("Son of Nixon," January) that in his wrap-up he apparently left golly and pulled to that stage of being soundly that strikes in many Oliver Stone admirers. "National Born Killers is a surprising meditation on violence." "Mediators? That movie is a cartoon—as violent as most of Stone's films (*Platoon* is a caricature of war). He looks for the feature or quality in his subjects that is least appealing and, like the cartoonist, caricatures that element beyond all boundaries of reason or truth."

—JACKSON M. SAUNDERS
Tucson, Ark.

OLIVER STONE is obsessed with floating the biographies of former U.S. presidents. As his next plot device, how about a gay James Buchanan? After all, he never married. Give Robert Redford the role and assign Brad Pitt as the lover of our fifteenth president. Oh, he'll be your greatest cinematic obsession.

—RICHARD E. NISANDER
Washington, D.C.

The Bad Stephen

WHAT LAME Stephen Soden the right to strongly rule two movie plots in his piece on Kevin Spacey ("The Bad Kevin," [July, January])? The big mystery in *The Usual Suspects* is the identity of Keyser Soze (if he even really exists). The audience does not discover this until (hardly) the last minute of the movie. Soden did the same thing with *Seven*. Many people cannot see every movie when it comes out and are waiting to rent the video. For him to ruin these movies knowingly—"Oops, hope that didn't spoil it for you"—is rude and unnecessary in an article that is not a movie review but a profile on one actor.

—BETH MORRISON
Arlington, Va.

Letters on the above should be mailed to The Sound and the Fury, Magazine, c/o New York Magazine, 100 York Ave., New York, N.Y. 10003, or sent by E-mail to ny@nytimes.com. Please include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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TURNED FROM
GREY TO
BLACK, AND
HE LIVED
TO BE 160
YEARS OLD."**

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BACKSTAGE WITH ESQUIRE

THE UNITED STATES ARMY has always had its favorite elements—we mean that in a nice way—but until contributing editor **Daniel Vail's** "A Few Good Nuns" (page 102) no one has ever revealed just how serious the situation truly is.

As Vail's investigation makes clear, skid-row soldiers at Fort Bragg had been openly (and proudly) wearing their Nazi and Aryan insignia and holding regular meetings in the barracks while the Army looked the other way. And it was not until the murder of a young black couple in Fayetteville, North Carolina, that the Army decided to clean up its white-supremacy problem.

"They were too hiding and got rid of their Nazi paraphernalia," says Vail, who, along with photographer **Detlev Krastacht**, infiltrated the group and witnessed the soldiers' sinister workshopping. "These guys actually felt they were being wrongly accused by the Army."

Vail says he was also struck by the survival quality of Fort Bragg. "In the day I was on post, there were twelve DUIs, a drive-by shooting, and a soldier who jumped out a window."

But neo-Nazi soldiers, Vail points out, are by no means a product of a lawless army base. "Remembers," says Vail, who wrote about the citizen militia movement for *Esquire* last year, "the skid-rowers are the fastest-growing segment of the white-supremacy movement. And there are at least four army bases that have acknowledged such behavior."

Vail is writing a play *Black Helicopters* for New York's Public Theater.

HIS APPEARANCE THIS MONTH marks **Rene Marcin's** third *Esquire* cover in nine years. The first time around, in October 1976, he was fortunate enough to work with a lucky *Esquire* pen. In January 1979, we paired him with an *Esquire* editor. "This time," he says, "I did it to work with pen pals" (see page 76). In "Men's Lonely Hearts" (page 46), contributing editor **Martha Sherrill** finds that beneath that amiable lover's exterior is a man eager to find a wife—or at least a liberian-type who looks like Kate Wins. "Some women are going to be very lucky," says Sherrill of her former new E-mail friend. "I mean, he's got a house that's ready to be moved into."

"The last time I saw Muhammad Ali," says contributing editor **Mark Kram**, who profiled the Gussie for us in 1976 and wrote about Mike Tyson this month ("The Tiger King," page 74). "I told him I was sorry he was a prisoner of his own body. 'You don't understand,' he told me. 'Me



Mike Tyson (right) with a friend.



and this body, we've had some kind of life. I can only hope that Mike Tyson, in fact physically, will end up having the same feeling someday." Kram wanted the publicity at his Las Vegas moment, when the two *Esquire* pages lifted about, among other things, Dolema O.J., and Wayne Newton. To get the accompanying pictures of Tyson—the first time he has posed in many years—photographer **Susan D'Orazio** had to go through some pretty tricky negotiations. The first day in Las Vegas, Tyson canceled three sessions, so D'Orazio went to the strip clubs and won access. The next day, Tyson pulled out again. What she had—D'Orazio was on a roll. He took his chips back down to the tables and won again. The third day, "I talked to my friend [Dol] Jim [impression]



Martha Sherrill.

Russell Strassman who then spoke to Mike. 'Ten men are here, the gate to his house opened.' So not only did I get these photos," says D'Orazio whose work has appeared in *Alfred* and *Indian* magazines. "But I got him to take his shirt off and I'm up 15,000."

Some winter **John Taylor** says he lived so drunk he "led an adventurous life, but when I looked back on things, that seemed to be a delusion. I had spent too much time in brothel places like Houston and Los Angeles, attending trials or political rallies or driving rented cars to interview people in air-conditioned offices. Africa called." He Taylor—who lived in Ghana as a boy and was once a reporter in South Africa—returned to Zaire, where he spent six weeks, mostly on the Congo, and lived on his Canadian passport. In the course of his journey ("Savory Savants, Corpses, and Whores," page 80), Taylor found no Colonel Kurtz but did briefly befriended a chimp (see above), who he sadly admitted, "was later bought and eaten."

The main problem contributing editor **Michael Angelo** had on his "date" with skater *Olivia Bird* ("Of Ice and Men," page 60) was the language. "At first, I thought she was angry with me," says Angelo. "But then I realized it was just some weird Ukrainian mating ritual." Angelo did, however, solve one linguistic mystery: "I finally learned once and for all that the word for 'floor' and 'sex' is the same." Don't ask us.



DONNA KARAN
NEW YORK

Reality Check

The highs and lows of our favorite highbrows and lowlifes. By Jeannette Walls



MAGIC POTIONS

Just a Regular Guy

With **Michael Hollingsworth** spent all his effort to run for a California Senate seat, it may have taken a

heavier price of his family's fortune than people thought. A Washington source says that his wife, author/conservative

philosopher **Arianna Stassinopoulos Hollingsworth**, has been quietly bankrolling Mr. Life, a controversial nutrition product. After all, every little bit helps.

Some health experts have questioned the contents of Mr. Life and the tactics used by its distributors (think *Amway*) have come under attack. Mrs. Hollingsworth, according to the source, has even gone to her good friend **Newt Gingrich**, trying to convince the Speaker of the House in using or distributing the product. Hollingsworth did not return phone calls. "Gingrich," she added, "says the source." "He has enough to worry about."

MYTHOIA

Inside Hillary's Briefs

Our **Beloray Clinton** is personal attorney. Barrer revealed himself when he wife got the White House beat, but he remains close to the Clinton and regularly advises them. In fact, Barrer testified at the Whitewater

once **President Clinton**'s personal attorney. Barrer revealed himself when he wife got the White House beat, but he remains close to the Clinton and regularly advises them. In fact, Barrer testified at the Whitewater



hearings—a subject Barrer regularly covers. What's more, several publishing

GRAT MATTER About Men

As the **Belt** bigger family squabbles over succession at *The New York Times*, a previously unadmitted "bastard" has emerged: thirty-year-old George Alexander, who claims to be **Arthur "Punch" Sulzberger Jr.**, an illegitimate son Alexander was born to *Times* reporter Lillian Hellman Alexander in 1970. That year, she filed a paternity suit against Sulzberger, who was then the assistant to the publisher. Sulzberger denied being the father. He did, however, agree to pay the woman \$250,000 over seven years because, his

lawyers said, he wanted to avoid publicity.

Now, amid the battle over who will take the *Times* into the twenty-first century—their apparent **Arthur "Punch" Sulzberger Jr.**, may not be so apparent—Alexander isn't a man, but once again surfaced. "He has been a specialist here for years," says one source. "Now he has renounced."



Punch is a punch?

BRONX: HAS ITTS turned a Money?

under any this **Barron**, who also represents publishing deals **Ben Bradlee**, **William Bennett**, and **James Burke** (see *Money*) worked on **Hillary Clinton**'s contract for *It's a Wonderful Life*. Publisher **Russell H. Schuster**

denies this, saying the attorney was **James Heller**, a **William H. Connolly** ten lawyer. A **Barron** insider says, "[Barron and Barron] have managed to keep the money separate." But another insider is less certain: "It's just too close to clear." So, of the president's wife, the book's author, agency

SECRETS

Brevity Is the Soul of Lingerie

There must be something about the life of a model that makes a woman want to stay close to underwear. When **Book Press** "inspired" from her husband's Hollywood business, she went on to make *Book Press* **Now the Mayflower Modern** **Spiegel** **Burrows**, is getting into lingerie, as it were.

When **Burrows**'s positioner was featured by police a decade ago, the model her hand at selling underwear being a talk show host, writing, locating, and managing a consulting agency. According to a

fashion-world source, **Burrows** is now giving advice on being sexy to those Victoria's Secret models. **Burrows** recently pitched to backstage at the lingerie company's fashion show helping the girls adjust their G-strings, as **Burrows** insists she's not working for Victoria's Secret but wouldn't comment on who was paying her to help at the show.

"I have to be obsessive," she quite honestly said. "But I have no commitment. There are some areas of my life that I just have to keep private."

She's so well-mannered.

KINKS

That Costs Extra

Just that psychosocial thriller (not), didn't exactly make a killing at the box office, but several Hollywood sources say it was also hit by some unexpected copiers.

Paramount paid **Stacy** **Exeter** \$2.5 million for the script, then turned it over to director **William Friedkin**. Then came the heavy budget. Friedkin and the already-known **Exeter** Friedkin made so many changes to the script, say some film insiders, that **Exeter** was not



Is Exeter has by any other name...

name taken off the credits. Why pay millions for an **Exeter** script if you can't bill it as a Joe Friedkin film? asks one Hollywood source. So when Paramount gave **Exeter** a deal worth as much as \$4 million for a third commitment to his next script, Hollywood cynics

denied it as a "vacation" to keep his name on *Joe Exeter*—the source, calling it a

"deeply unbalanced and unfair." He adds, "I don't just very much and look forward to working with Billy Friedkin in the near future."

That may be, says one source: as Friedkin had been mentioned as a possible director for **Exeter**'s next movie, *On the Night*. And that project, however, has been taken over by **Living** **Los Angeles** director **Mike Figgis**. Such plot twists.

SUPERLUCK Lotsa Luck

Now entering the ever so pending, might the lottery is a magazine show, well, the lottery. A source says that the New York State Lottery Commission is drawing up plans to produce a monthly magazine devoted to those lucky numbers. The proposed circulation one million readers.

What's more, there is talk of another plan to bring out a national lottery magazine, giving the winning numbers of games across the country as well as profiles of winners. Some say the magazine is a modest one: hundred million. "They're being very, very optimistic," says a source. That's, yes, you know.

Early on, **McMahon** would get his magazine magazine off the ground.

VIRTUAL REALITY CHECK

Psst, Wanna See Delta Burke Thin?

For a photo of a made actor or supermodel on line a child's play. But for only embarrassing pictures of celebrities, check out **Before They Were Stars** (<http://www.eyecandy.com>). Pictures before/after. Based on the television show of the same name starring **Chuck** **Hamrick**, **Scott** **Bain**, **BTWS** features such photographic treasures as **Diane Sawyer** in the 1970s **Junior Miss** Pagesant. Sent by a Michael

Richards is a comment on *The Dating Game*, and a fourteen-year-old **Mike** **Jager** in a rodeo-climbing video. And, yes, he already had some big of lips.



Junior Miss Sawyer and young Mike.



Reality Check

OLD TRICKS

The Case of the Counterfeit Case

FIRST THERE WAS *Cherish*. Then came *Pat Nixon's* "good Republican cloth" coat. And, of course, there was that hasty Watergate problem. Now

the prodigal president with a gift, a few ladies attack one from Carter (possibly the one he is carrying so proudly below). Nixon earned around the bracelet

for a few weeks, but then the fringe broke. It was taken to Carter, where the staff instantly recognized it as a cheap knockoff. "Taylor said that Nixon still insisted on carrying it around," says a source. "He was really proud of it, even though it was a counterfeit."

Though the Nixon Library is trying to ease the tpe, so to speak, saying, "There's nothing there [Taylor] was speaking off the cuff," another source says Nixon's office was forced to return to verify after getting complaints from the Mexican government.

Or maybe from the street vendor who actually sold the bracelet.

AFTERLIVES

Acquitting Himself

THAT CUTE upstart *James Wilworth* is taking a leave of absence from the magazine, and sources say it's to ghostwrite a book for *J. J. Sagan's* tongue (and biggie) brother *Robert Kardashian*. That

surprised publishing readers, who remember that Wilworth wrote a piece that became notorious around *Time* because it portrayed a defense of the caddy *Mark Fuhrman*.

Wilworth, using a nondisclosure agreement, refused to discuss his book project. He did, however, say that "in hindsight, it was embarrassing to have done [the Fuhrman]



Not a giant friend.

article. We all learn." But, says one source, "right now, Q.J.'s lawyers aren't that much more popular than Mark Fuhrman."

MEDICINE

Take Two Lesbians and Call Me in the Morning

IN *Howard Stern's* latest book *Men Against*, the media god reveals his very personal (and strange) battle with obsessive compulsive disorder. The following letter on Stern's behavior was written to his wife, Alton, by Jeffrey M. Schwartz, M.D., an associate research professor at UCLA and the author

of *Don't Look at Your Book* on OCD.

Dear Alton, Do you ever wonder why your husband, Howard Stern, an obviously intelligent and successful man, does the sort of things described in his new book, *Men Against*? Why he dresses in women's clothes, misbehaves in his private life? Why he is

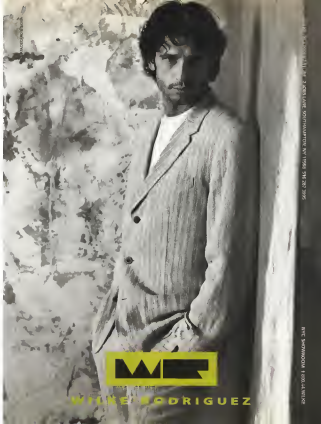
chronically abusive to others, guests and colleagues on his radio show? Why your husband is so fixated on images of anal penetration? (It is due to a powerful fear of intimacy, intense feelings of insecurity and emotional vulnerability on the part of the person "bored" by the person.) For Howard Stern, Howard is compelled to do things that society finds offensive in order to get his energy because society is viewed emotionally as an extension of his parents. You might want to suggest that he begin with his problems of premature ejaculations and compulsive masturbation. Instead of being explicit and honest perhaps he should focus on your life, and who knows maybe his loyal audience will even learn to appreciate that. Life will be better for all of us if they do.

Al right, so he's got some issues to work out.



Nixon into leather scandal has followed *Richard Nixon* beyond death (and *Oliver Stone*). That one involves his famous bracelet.

John Taylor, executive director of the John F. Kennedy Library and Birthplace in Yorba Linda, California, recently told *CRASH* how Monocelli *King* *Nixon* presented



WILKE RODRIGUEZ

Esky



You Can't Hunt with a Brancusi

This may be the only sculpture you'll want a pencil to sink. This Skunk, a New York artist, fashions working firearms, like the one given above ("Clock Box"), from odds and ends such as lead pipe, drywall screws, paper clips, springs from a desk lamp, sheet metal, and random plumbing parts, all held together with welds and duct tape. "I wanted to show that you can pretty much make anything out of nothing," says Skunk, who last fall lit his artworks before he showed them. ("Skunk" is then his exploded art," he says.) Skunk's pieces were shown this winter at New York's Morris Contemporary as well as in an exhibition on gun iconography, a show that also included works by Andy Warhol and John Deere.

—ANDREW CHAMBERS

THIS MONTH:
Fried potatoes, nasty
wine talk, the return of
musical theater for guys,
the best political novel
ever written, and the
manliest ride on the road.



Wineglass Sculpture 20



Detail from "Pencilcase Clock"

OUR KIND OF WOMAN

Shania Twain

If she were more (and were still alive), Patsy Cline would play. Country-western women, traditional victims of beer-drunk Deer dogs parking their pickups on the chaotic side of town, have got themselves a brand-new role model. She's independent! She sports less than-ling hair! She's an advanced-rubber-strangler! Country's newest queen, the 30-year-old pump-leon beauty Shania Twain, packed her second album, *The Women in Me*, with enough attitude to make Andrea Dworkin blush her skirts and break into an impromptu two-step.

"Some people say my music is hard on men," says Twain, no doubt referring to scorching songs like this one, from "Any Man of Mine." "Even when I'm ugly he will honor love me."

"My music is more in your face," she says, giggling, "but in a fun way I've always been a very dance person. I had to be. When you grow up singing in bars, you can't keep men guessing. You have to let them know your boundaries straight off."

If the bawdiest of bachelors had a gender, it would be a can-do to a rabid, they might think twice. Shania, who grew up in the tiny Ojibwa Indian community of Timmins, Ontario, where it was possible homicide, though she won't go so far as to claim self-defense. "My father taught us to kill our own food, and my job was to set the rabbit snares. It looks like a game until you get up in a loop. When the rabbit gets in a little trap, it's smothered." Whatever you say, dear, "It's also good with a gun." —JENNIFER SEARS



THE FRAGRANCE AND SKIN

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CARS: PHIL PATTON

Armed Forces

IT HAS FIGHTING WINGS and crowd-control missiles mounted direct and single. But now that the Hummer—AM General's civilianized version of the military H1—has come to the home front, a main face to toughest challenges: the rising infrastructure of urban America. It can do Kuwait, but can the Hummer do Manhattan?

As Hummers are replacing large flowers and Lamborghinis in upscale garages, the folks in Milwaukee, Indiana, who manufacture them are not to prove that the Hummer.

In today's cities, at a time when New York is contemplating using Ford Explorers and minivans as taxis, the Hummer also makes a lot of sense. Think of the Hummer (which gets only about thirteen miles to the gallon) as a sports car with a sense of reality. Owning the hottest SUV around may ultimately be not just more fun but more reasonable than subjecting a luxury sports sedan to non-sipping potholes and slippery parking cobblestones.

To find out, your correspondent rented the toughest vehicle he had driven since

vacation: a minivan, controlling as big V-6 diesel or gasoline engine (made by GM), it can clear sixteen inches—twice the height of most SUVs—descent—and carry up to four thousand pounds. The new turbo diesel option gives you added torque, but the pickup is slow. Note, however, it is underpowered. Floor it and the Hummer takes a rocket worthy of John Gotti.

Thrown into the Mad Max game of New York driving, the Hummer moves much more easily than its ugly four-inch width suggests. Its imposing size deters opportunistic line-punchers, and even taxis grow respectful when faced with the prospect of a big check from a Hummer. At about ten thousand pounds, a Hummer has all the agility you need for the amusement park of Manhattan's old West Side Highway, where the city seems to shift construction barriers weekly just to keep drivers alert.

In Times Square at rush hour, when the taxi in front of you suddenly decides to turn, four-wheel drive helps grip quickly, and the beast rocks crisply steady on its big coil springs for a few seconds like a boxer bouncing on the balls of his feet.

To provide the Hummer's height and clearance, the wonderful machinery of its gears—high range for power, low for off-road—remains up inside the passenger cabin, producing a vast mass of unused space that lends an extra dimension to conversations with your passengers. The controls are also in a workable area: the horn, mounted on a stalk off the wheel, where you must stop a walk or indicate your intent to the urban jungle.

the XM's tank on one of the most inhospitable landscapes in the world, where thousands of high-powered, heavily armed vehicles come charging at you—Marines, of course, where Coprocals with reinforced bumpers are barreled through the streets by riotous mobs.

The civilian Hummer offers more comfortable seats than the original, plus more control and central locking. With power steering and

We'll take Kuwait. You send a Hummer to Manhattan.

which starts to agitate, can follow the gap into traffic. About a third of Hummers go to industrial users—oil workers and uranium prospectors—or, say, Zimbeba's Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

For civilians, the Hummer is a kind of hard-rock sports car. The first rule was to Arnold Schwarzenegger after all. When a Hummer comes into a neighborhood, the company manages dogs bark and kids sob.

Eye Exam

The Hummer's transition from military to civilian vehicle is evident in that of the pop. New Chrysler has awarded the new generation Army Ranger the most dramatic of the original World War II vehicle. But a casual viewer would be hard-pressed to discern the new model from the old one.

Good guessing: The old one has square headlights, the new one, round.

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Another Funny Thing

The great American guy musical returns

A man's movement on Broadway? More than two decades after it was killed off by the age of *Agony*, *Boyz n the City*, and other consciousness elevators, the guy musical is back. First the crap-shooting *Gays and Dolls* was revised, then the Machiavellian *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. And this month, it's back to Broadway for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*—a 1950s vaudeville-tan send-up of bawdy (and bawpy) male behavior, based on the works of Plautus, with a playful score by Stephen Sondheim and a clever book by Larry Gelbart and Bert Shereckow.

For decades, the musical was an anachronism in form, a melding of operetta with American ingredients like swing, rhythm and wisecracking comedy. *Show Boat* and, later, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*, *Candide*, and *The King and I* proved that the musical was one of the few forms of American popular cul-

ture that wasn't usually sanitized.

But sometime in the fifties, everything began to change. Women got work, the lecher's smile was banished to the jungles of the business world. Soon a guy was so peeved that he'd rather eat a cat's heart casserole than schlep to see a bunch of people singing and dancing about love and stuff. Hence the birth of the "guy musical." Broadway's attempt to engage the tired businessmen.

These shows were often scotch-swaggering, cynical satires about sex, money, relationships, and work. In *Forum* the guy viewpoint is expressed most refreshingly in the desperate attempts of the main character, Pseudolus, to be freed from slavery—a theme, close to the suburban housewife's heart. As costar Gelbart says, "Musicals like *Forum* are not about tender

feelings. It's a Kurosawa show, a fast-paced musical with lots of 'Tina.' We wanted to bring the guys in with girls and laughter."

More than ten years before, the first guy musical, Frank Loesser's *Gays and Dolls*, used



the perspective of a woman to depict the honey-schmoozy, and Hollywood responded with guy musicals like the brazenly satirical *Gays in the Street* and *Loose Ends for Winter*, both starring the guy musical apothecary the late Gene Kelly. Then followed the male heroines *For Some Reason*, *Some Brothers*, and back on Broadway there was *Damn Women*, a guy musical with heart.

South Pacific was Rodgers and Hammerstein's attempt to embrace the genre, but it was too girly, with Mary Martin washing men out of her hair and a plea for racial

tolerance, to make it a guy musical, unlike *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Candide*, or *Man of La Mancha*. By the sixties, every suburban male fantasized himself a cowboy who could sing in the wind or a silent-movie king or a Don Quixote taking it the worst of the claustrophobic dream. (I remember my dad breaking down in tears when he heard "The Impossible Dream," his favorite song.)

Promote *Forum*, Neil Simon's spin adaptation of the Billy Wilder film *The Apartment*, was the last of

the guy musicals, despite its hugely popular *Boyz n the City* soundtrack. Socio-political events of the time had made a desecration of the subgenre, and *Forum* itself was one such casualty when a first-rate 1991 production starring Phil Spector failed in the box office.

So, why a revival? Maybe it's because, as Gelbart concludes, "The hapless husband the love struck youth, the braggart warrior, the wily slave, the brazen courtesan—all those scenarios are just as applicable today as they were then. Comedy taught men comedy forever."

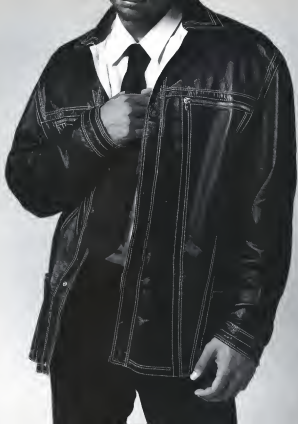
Renaissance Grunge

Pillars, a Philadelphia-based sextet, puts the rowdy and rambunctious back into dances from before the time of Bach, with *Classical's Obscene*, its debut CD for the sex-magically filthy label to dozens of classical greats: Beethoven's *Grognolewerk*, Beethoven's *hurdy-gurdy*, classical, appropriately named "rudekatz," and other instruments are heard playing gruffly, even heavily Italian dance music from the 1600s. Gentle contrast is offered by songs from the courts and chapels, but Pillars's goal, well realized here, is to be left and put and blow the house down with a pile of good-time environmental songs and dances. French- and Spanish-themed CDs are in the works, and Pillars is scheduled to break wind on tour in Europe this summer.

—KATHY TITUS

YOUR OWN SEX-CELLS ARE IN FACT BEEN ASKING somewhere. There is an culture that has continued to grow to a new

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BOOKS: WILL BLATHE

The High and the Mighty

HAN sex lived instead of dying in 1981 as a gloriously dead-up forty-eight-year-old speed freak, the now-dead Billie Lee Brammer would surely have become, well, a somewhat older speed freak. Arguably the greatest American political novelist for a single book, *The Gay Place* published when he was thirty. Brammer, in his later years crossed around Austin, flipping down acquaintances with the greeting "Hi, got any speed?" His lethal drugster, the semiretired Sidney Brammer, aware of how many years the crystal snuff had burned away, suspects he couldn't have lived a lot longer anyway. "I think he would have made it into his fifties," she says. But he ended prematurely, suffocating on his own vomit in a

renned room, clutching a copy of Ezra Pound's *Canzoni*, with \$4,500 from a drug deal in a sock inside his coat pocket. The night before he died, Brammer told Sidney that he wanted to buy a house for his children with the money, instead, they used it to bury him.

If you know Billie Lee, as most everyone in Austin did, and if you know his wanted novel (published by Houghton Mifflin to critical acclaim and no sales in 1981), as most everyone does not, you would understand how his precocious, scandalous, most selected scenes' appetites but earned no real class on Brammer. In the states and overseas, he was blowing in the mind-shattering winds of the counterculture, a chicken-fried Ken Kesey *Dispac* stable at a

new novel. Billie Lee was better living his life than writing it. If that chance can be seen as inevitable for a homefronted factory with parts churning, it's also true that the legend of Billie Lee's premature failure has no share without the early glory.

That achievement is, of course, *The Gay Place*, issued now by the University of Texas Press (with also, Billie's first novel mispelled). At the center (and the edge) of its three linked novellas is a bourbon-sipping, watermelon-chomping, convincing you have a problem. You need help, and then the first step is to tell her. In any case, if she finds out on her own, it will be tougher.

"Should you confess but permit in the affair, she will intuitively know that she is not getting your sexual energy. She will outlive you. You will say she's wrong. To believe you, she will have to deny her intuitive wisdom. That can lead to problems. You won't be able to do anything right. She'll see your time-watching sports on TV as a sign that you don't love her."

"If you decide the affair was a conscious error, in some time past. But across create a small wall, so say that. 'Something happened a year ago that I had had about. It was a stupid mistake, and it hasn't done it again. I don't expect you to forgive me overnight.' And then stop talking. It takes time and effort to rebuild trust. But it can be done. Men will want to drop it. She'll want to go over it again and again. You have to know that."

ASK EBERT

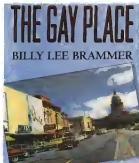


Q: How do I tell her I've cheated?

A: "An important consideration is whether or not she can handle it," says John Gray, Ph.D., author of *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*. "If you feel she can't, keep it to yourself and stay straight. If you fabricate, you must recognize you have a problem. You need help, and then the first step is to tell her. In any case, if she finds out on her own, it will be tougher."

"Should you confess but permit in the affair, she will intuitively know that she is not getting your sexual energy. She will outlive you. You will say she's wrong. To believe you, she will have to deny her intuitive wisdom. That can lead to problems. You won't be able to do anything right. She'll see your time-watching sports on TV as a sign that you don't love her."

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take a look at the new book, *The Gay Place*, by Billy Lee Brammer. It's a story about a man who is a politician and a woman who is a politician's wife. The book is a collection of three novellas. The first novella is about a man who is a politician and a woman who is a politician's wife. The second novella is about a man who is a politician and a woman who is a politician's wife. The third novella is about a man who is a politician and a woman who is a politician's wife.

With a new introduction by Dan Graham

April: The Coolest Month



THE DOGS

Sunday score, every troubled movie, from the achy cry to the crumbly commercial, will feature an occasion of *Pet Haman*. In moments of desperation, directors often turn to a domesticated animal—usually a dog—for a quick, throwaway laugh. Typically, the hero is trying to escape his would-be killer or angry significant other or is perhaps just caught in an embarrassing situation. Just as he's ripped his pants on a red white climbing out a window, the camera takes down to the alley below to find the family man looking up at him quizzically. This doesn't include all the current films that feature dogs: *Pet Haman*, *The National Society of Film Critics* chose *Roxie* as its favorite movie of 1995, meanwhile, *Uta* (Tina Turner) and *Janeane Garofalo* team up for Fox's upcoming *The Truth About Cats and Dogs*, and MGM plans to beam on the unnamed *All Dogs Go to Heaven 2*.

Feeling Jackie's shame: *Perseus*'s cat (left) from *Alien* (middle) and *Star Trek*'s

renewed forty-plus cat (diamond ring) (above), a gift from *Alien*, while simple folk will generate toward her grade school French project, complete with doodles of women in (what else?) chic evening gowns. *Kingslake* catalogs (top) are available from an un-Bowenish tall tree number, two-to-fours, with proceeds going to Bowen's JFK Library.

LADY AND THE TRAMP



Pet Movie Hall of Fame: They're all dog above

ARTS



MATTHEW

LAUREE



RENO

RED YEN YEN



RENO

BIG TALK

A term that's circulating among academics and *Belushi* purists alike is "hysterically alienated." It's used to describe people who consider themselves so far removed from mainstream culture that they begin to ponder an act of violent action against society—like blowing up a government building in Oklahoma or setting fire to a Jewish-owned store in Harlem.

BIG BROTHER

Is this the death knell of water cooler schmoose? While fringe *Hamlet* starts up and margins grab all the attention, a quieter development may prove more telling. Many larger businesses are rushing to set up their own internal networks—called intranets—allowing employees in disparate branches to access company missions, exchange mail and files, and post messages away from prying public eyes. One research firm estimates that by 1997, the intranet will be four times as big as the Internet. Mean while, many new Web sites (such as fashion news *IndiTV*) hope to find users and corporate leaders are thinking the Net has televisual

potential by creating the polished, fast-loading cashflows of the Internet "the first channel on the Internet."

BIG MISTAKE

It's the word that even *The New York Times* gets wrong, the word most likely to be misapplied over the next four years, by journalists and businessmen alike: millennium. Adding to the confusion is railway (of or relating to a millennium), which has only one a not to mention military (of or relating to headgear).

BIG DEBUT

New York's *Ed Norton* jumps from small obscurity off-off-Broadway to Hollywood stardom with a triple threat of showcase roles: first, opposite Richard Gere in *Primal Fear*; second, another prominent supporting role in Woody Allen's new film, later this year; third, a project that's in the works with director Mike Fanning. The

self-proclaimed Norton's everyman good looks belie his movie comedy potential and his very dramatic background. Esley sees Thomas Harker's potential.

BIG CHAIR

Combining plywood-and-chrome simplicity with a cartoon silhouette, the Jackson chair has been turning up in medieval costumes from thick San Francisco cafe chain Panca Coffee (named for the Turk who opened London's first coffee shop) to Continental, the most Philadelphia bar-restaurant designed by Los Angeles Miguel Calvo. At just ten for the antique version (sign for the around), Anne Jacobson's bit of non-efficient whimsy is well within the reach of first-time furnishees, too. We prefer the honest, unapologetic version, but the candy-colored Playfully chairs are also hard to resist.

Hot seat: The Jackson chair comes in colors (or not)

Fry This One

Here's a really interesting recipe I'm going to try," says a gal. "Soon as I get the time." It's a

color photo ripped from a food magazine, a dish requiring seventeen ingredients, three of them "available in Oriental or South American specialty shops in major cities," and a tablespoon each of two ward 50 liquors you'll never open again till New Year's Eve 1999 (after you've drunk up everything else in the house). This isn't a recipe, it's a messenger hunt—and the price is three hours of dog work in the kitchen.

It's easy to see why really interesting recipes are so popular. They're great fun to read, and they never fail—but only because nobody ever has time to try them.

Try this really interesting recipe instead. No skills required, quick cooking, ingredients available everywhere. Don't you hate it, what do you know? Two bucks and fifteen minutes of your time.

FRENCH-FRIED SWEET POTATOES

Sweet potatoes prepared this way are extraordinary. Place what potatoes will work, too. (Bananas are the best kind, but all potatoes make good fries.) Carrots are very good for your health, but corn oil works just as well. You'll need two or three more:

potatoes
Carrots oil (or corn oil)
Sweet french fry pan
Sweet spice or spices
Paper towels

Wet potatoes and rub dry with towel. Don't bother peeling the skin or where the veins are. Cut potatoes into fries roughly half an inch square and four inches long. Pour two inches of oil into frying pan and put on high heat for five minutes. Put a single fry in the oil. It will bubble and turn brown in about ten seconds. If it doesn't, wait and try again. When the oil is hot enough, put in a handful of potato slices. Don't splash, and remember, if potatoes are wet, hot oil spits. When potatoes turn brown, taste one. It should be busy but not crunchy raw. When they're done take out fries and put them on paper towels to drain salt and serve very hot. It's better to make two or three small batches than one big one. Leave heat on under pan between servings.



otherwise, the oil gets cold and you waste time reheating. Don't throw oil away—you can use it again and again. Strain it and store in your refrigerator. In well-run French households, where fries are eaten every day the oil is simply left in the frying pan. (You kill any germs when you reheat it, right?) When potatoes get

it's Mr. Potato Head. First, easy, important, and good.

too dark too quickly (or once a month), throw out the old oil and start again. Keep a lid on the pan or the kitchen will always smell like yesterday's cold fries. (Unless you like that smell. And millions of Parisians do.

Trout News from All Over

You can enhance this year's search for the all-time perfect trout-fishing spot. Or you can just buy one, if you have a half acre and \$20,000 to spare and can stand to wait a month or so. Born Fisher, of Menards,

Wisconsin, specializes in building custom-made trout streams. He starts off with a five-foot waterfalls built with lifelike "rock"—that runs into a twenty-foot stream ending in a small lake-like enclosure. There's a pump at the bottom to keep the five thousand gallons of water circulating, then it's built, Fisher launches it with certain and other river plants, insects, and, of course, fish—trout or small mountain bass, depending on your tastes. If that still sounds like too much work, you could just content yourself with Trout & Shadetail History, which Rangel will publish this month. It's a true beauty—anyway full-color. *Entrepreneur* by James French, whom *The New York Times* has called "a far bet to become the Aristotle of the fishing world."



Brioni
ROMA

THE ART OF HAND-TAILORED ELEGANCE



A Roman à Bruce?

I DON'T WANT there to be a poison pen item," says Roger Director about the wife character in his first novel, *A Place in Hell*, a wickedly observed send-up of the sleazy business of television that Willard has just

published. Still, it's a safe to say that at least one character—Tony Parsi, a middle-aged, overpaid TV actor on his way to becoming a big-budget action movie hero and "part owner of a wildly overpriced restaurant better

Director's cut: Is Willard the epitome of media incest?

known for the T-shirts it sold than the cuisine"—may owe something to the fact that the author was a producer on the TV series *Moonlighting*. Which made famous stable-chained TV star turned-action-hero Bruce Willis.

But, says Director, Willis shouldn't read too much into the less-than-flattering characterization. Part of his movie image notwithstanding, Bruce is smarter than Tony Parsi. Bruce is someone, for example, who is reading books all the time," says the former New York Daily News columnist, who got his television break writing for *Hill Street Blues*. "I have to say that, to a greater or lesser extent, the characters are composites."

"Television," Director explains, "drives people to every kind of vice, sick and ruin, and debased, sexual conduct in their personal lives." And in fact, by book's

end, Tony Parsi is suspected of manipulating the wife of the surgeon, who in turn sabotages the actor's career, destroying his own TV show in the process.

By sheer coincidence, the composite narrator is a former New York newspaper columnist who gets his television break writing for a hit cop show. So could there be a well-known cop-show producer who may integrate elements of himself in the composite character obsessed with his own early-morning bathroom habits?

"All I'll say is there might be," says Director with the air of a man who stands to lose time his surprising career.

Poison pen accusations be damned, one of the more pleasant consequences for Roger Director is for a that author is holding firm the rights to the about-to-be published book. A movie based on a novel based on a television show? Guess who won't be reading for the Tony Parsi part. —MARK MARON

NEXT UP

What some of our favorite authors are up to
Geri Allen: The jazz pianist is working on a performance piece on women in jazz, writing a composition that was commissioned by the Danish government (she received that country's prestigious Jazzpar award), recording a new album of originals for Blue Note.

Tim Parks: The British author of Italian Neighbors has just finished his "erroneous" novel so dense, he says, titled *Europe* about the "intensely intense, usually claustrophobic collision of the vocalic lures of love and politics," is completing an academic book that examines Lawrence and Joyce and the problems they create for

Italian translation, is translating Roberto Calasso's new book.

Jon Jaramba: About to release his Macmillan debut, *Dead Man*, with Johnny Depp, working on his short-film series, *Offroad Quattro* (which he plans to turn into a feature, writing an autobiography inspired by the



lectures of John Cage, starting a new script "that I don't want to say too much about because I'll get all confused."

Lee Salzman: The star of *Mad Sages* will appear in London's staging of *Les Mis*, plans to return to medical school later this year or next. "I dreamed my name I would," she says, "so I'd better."

Robert Wilson: Directing and designing Gertrude Stein's *Four Saints in Three Acts*, continuing through Europe with his acclaimed *Henri*. A *Moonlighting* director. Emphatic, in original play with music by Philip Glass. He's also going to exhibit drawings and designs at New York's Paula Cooper Gallery.

—MICHAEL J. ADORINO

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The Male Animal

TO YOUR HEALTH: How to stay fit, sane, and on top of your game. Edited by Anita Lester

THE STUFF
OF SPORT

A Cellular Sole

PUMA, THE German company best known for its soccer shoes, has just gained a step on the field in the race for the perfect running shoe. The Puma Concept is the first model to replace the foam-rubber midsole entirely with air. Flip one over and, through snazzy cutaways, you'll see a translucent slab of honeycomb-shaped polyurethane air cells embedded within the hard rubber outer sole. This not only looks cool, it sidesteps the fatal flaw of foam—breaking down under the pounding of your feet. Most serious runners know they're courting knee problems if they don't

replace their shoes a couple of times a year, but Puma promises that its midsole will last, retaining 90 percent of its support for up to six hundred miles. So, thanks to Tencate technology, we're get a springy shoe that grows an upfling, George-Bush-jogging-in-the-morning sort of ride. Besides wearing well, those hexagonal cells cleverly handle a midsole's somewhat contradictory job—keeping the foot stable and preventing shock absorption when the shoe strikes the ground. In fact, the cell system could theoretically be “tailored” to the individual runner, the exact configuration of the midsole cells optimized for his particular weight and gait—but that one's in the future yet.

—JOSEPH HOSPER

THE FRONTMOST cells are more flexible at push-off, the point of maximum pressure.

THE FAT, soft cell under the heel allows for maximum give at the point of impact.

SMALLER, more rigid cells keep the foot from rolling to the inside after contact (overpronation), which is how most knee trouble begins.

IF CELLS are punctured, a shoe won't “go flat.” The cellular walls will maintain the sole's structural integrity.

THE MALE MIND: MICHAEL SEGALL The New Softness

ALONE-DINERMAN friend called recently to tell me he'd gotten remarried and was about to become, twenty years after his first child, a father again. As he talked, it became clear that the unexpected arrival had been his idea. He wasn't feeling great about his career—he'd been passed over for a promotion and was a little too familiar with the ring of the corporate ladder he had been clinging to for several years—and sensed that he'd be nearly seventy by the time his new heir graduated from college.

Under the circumstances, he wondered, what kind of father would he be?

According to recent research, a pretty good one. Since the 1980s, a number of studies have investigated an observation made by Carl Jung: As they get older, men become more like women, and women more like men. This convergence can be traced in each gender's shift in attitude toward work and family. As they mature, and Jung, men become more involved in intimate relationships, they seek gratification not just from work but from being with their wives, kids, and friends. Women begin to show greater interest in non-domestic activities and in self-assertion, independence, and achievement—often in a firm career.

Several researchers conjectured that these shifts were due to endocrine changes. Diminishing levels of estrogen in women do allow for greater absorption of testosterone, the greater hormone. But the investment in the roles of an inner-masculinity that can precisely measure minute amounts of hormones in the blood refused that theory. The decline in testosterone in men is so gradual over several decades that it couldn't possibly cause dramatic behavioral shifts. The massive flow of women into the work place in the 1980s made the question moot, anyway. They no longer enter the workforce only after their kids are

launched, most have been doing all along. But that doesn't change the fact that men do become more involved in matrimony and nurturing in midlife. Many of us marvel at how our own fathers, so tough and distant when we were kids, morph into old softies around their grandkids. Social scientist Orville Gilbert Berry, director of the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Successful Middle Development (MIDMAC), believes that men's generous toward nonwork activities begins when they're forced to do some serious rethinking about their careers.

“Very few of us actually realize the dreams we had in early adulthood,” Berry says. “A lot of men stop out in their careers before they're forty and end up moving their energies into other areas. For a lot of us, this means becoming more accurate and capricious.”

Many men make the shift when they're seventy at the height of their powers. The realization dawns: The closer you get to the top, the harder it is to get all the way there. By one estimate, each advance along the corporate food chain results in a 30-percent reduction in future prospect for promotion. We quickly adjust to that reality. A study of Cal

Swiss men found that though more than half of forty-year-olds still aspire to advance, only about a fifth of fifty-year-olds are interested in further ascendancy.

Recently, MIDMAC researchers learned that, for a lot of younger men, this process is accelerating. Those who report postponing their commitments are more likely than others to have had “negative work events.” The vast corporate downsizing is prompting a lot of soul-searching, says sociologist Elaine Weisberger, a MIDMAC researcher. “The typical male response is to concentrate more on family than on career—can be interpreted as a sign of maturity and growth.”

Which is what I was happy to report to my friend. He may be more ready for his blessed event than he thinks

More than half of 40-year-olds aspire to advance; only a fifth of 50-year-olds aim for further ascendancy.



Our junior midbrain whip will exit into the wind, while instructor O'Mara holds on to his hip cord.

TRYOUT Go Ahead, Jump

IF YOU WANT to jump out of a plane, let me warn you: You don't just jump. No. About a mile in the sky, they make you climb-out and hang by your fingers from the wingtip so you don't smack into the tail. Then you let go. Just as you know, he came I found out too late—I'd already plunked down my cash at Skydive Long Island and was sitting in jump school with a half-dozen equally startled students

"We had a choice: jump solo or have an instructor strapped to our backs. The latter method takes ten minutes to learn the *form* about five hours. I personally didn't want some guy bawling hard in my ear during a religious experience."

Our instructor, Mike O'Mara, is all business. "Once you're out, you're not coming back in," he says. "I will pry your fingers off."

So we pay our close attention to the "bug-X" hand-ach' position, to the slow five count, to this, uh, reserve-chute procedure. I've seldom listened as closely as I do to reminders for twisted knees or a partially opened canopy.

Skydive Long Island (848-635-5007) is one of three insured drop zones with membership in the US Parachute Association. Call 800-371-4374 for more info. First jumps on Long Island go for \$299, with all gear provided, bottled, and checked by the school. If you catch the bug, a certificate for basic jump training, plus about \$50, will get you airborne at any USPA site.

Out behind the classroom, we practice on a mock wing and tie onto management. "Lines are up over your chute. What do you do?" Mike's counting now because it's seventeen seconds to the ground at terminal velocity—no miles per hour. (Nice phrase, right?) I ace the exercises, but after one landing, Mike says he's calling an ambulance. "Broken ankle—knees weren't bent enough. Fly again."

Finally, it's time to go up. I've brought my seven-year-old son along, and he can't wait to see us jump. After all the dry runs, neither can I. I get harnessed up, tight. A radio is clipped above my shoulder to help guide me into the landing zone.

We slide into the little Cessna, and as we take off, I wave for the first to look in. Weird, but it doesn't put a steady thrum of adrenaline and the mental checklist. The door

opens, wind blows the cabin, and I sit on automatic: grab the strut, swing out, edge along the wing, hang, legs flapping in the prop wash, look to Mike, thumbs up, etc!

The downward acceleration is stunning, as is the fact that my fist suddenly coming up in my face with the shock of the opening canopy. Every thing checks out, and, by God, I'm looking at hick trees between my feet and it's bright and chill and quiet. I float the canopy and hang motionless. I don't want to come down and quit. I do, engaging into the landing zone. I glide in fast, knees bent, land on my side, get grided off the ground, and squawk down again. Come over! I gather in the Day-Glo silk, grinning to beat all. My son comes running up, eyes damp, and says "Oh my goodness!"

Mike's taught him not to swear—OH my goodness! For the life of me, I can't think of a better way to put it.

—ERIC PEARCE

HOME APPLIANCES

The Rubberless Rubber

THE FIBER IS ABOUT to make it official: The polyurethane condom that has been available west of the Rockies for more than a year now ("For use by individuals with latex sensitivity") will soon be safe enough even for non-Californians. Thinner than latex and impervious to oil-based lubricants, the new Avano appears to be a better mousetrap.

It took six years of R&D to reengineer Sonit Wrap into contraceptive technology. Unfaded, the Avano is clear and crackly—more flimsy than rubber. In Equipe's test bedrooms, it performed admirably. Much was made of the condom's "slime-squapp" feel once donned. The only complaint came from one disoriented fellow who said that the Avano was "too thin." A male version kind of guy, he repeatedly felt the need to verify that, yes, his test

ball was securely fastened.

The real discovery that polyurethane's virtually frictionless surface makes for an exceptionally smooth ride, and since this condom is only forty microns thick, heat conductivity is very, very up, which means that soft sex is again hot sex. The conundrum is that the

Avano's experience approach is that of steel on steel. Two cons: Because polyurethane film, though twice as strong as latex, is not as elastic, the Avano is tolerant a slush wider than most ordinary

condoms, which could pose a problem for the thin firm of the world. And it's a top Av. If you didn't know by now pleasure has to wait.

—ADAM FISHER

HEALTHWATCH

Watch Your Mouth



THAT'S THE HEAVY target advice to men about oral sex. Well, experts know that the AIDS virus can be present in the vaginal fluids of infected women, it's been thought that men were at low risk of oral infection from them. The basis for that belief—the fact that infections in the saliva of monkeys prevent oral HIV infection—has been shattered by studies that reveal far fewer HIV inhibitors in human saliva.

More poignantly, clinicians report increasing numbers of infected straight men whose only risky behavior was carnalizing. These reports are not surprising when it is considered that vaginal fluids can contain substantial blood, whose blood cells

proteins become off infection, and other elements that can carry the virus. Oral transmission can occur when the infected fluids come in contact with cuts or sores, even microscopic ones, in the mucous tissue of the mouth, admitting the virus into the bloodstream.

Carnalizing is therefore no longer considered "possibly safe"—meaning that you should avoid oral contact with vaginal fluids unless you are profoundly knowledgeable about your partner's long-term sexual history and HIV status.

While this news may be seriously demoralizing to lovers of oral pleasure, the solution is to take steps to make oral sex safer again.

► Avoid direct oral contact with vaginal fluids by using a dental dam—a square of thin latex available from sex shops—or two layers of plastic wrap.

► If you do get vaginal fluids on your mouth, minimize the odds against you by rinsing it out with at least 10-proof alcohol—vodka or gin, say.

—CHUCK TRAYN

Hey, Tight-Ass!

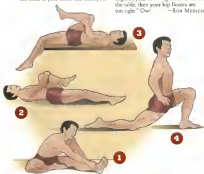
You're a cat? You don't grunt, sway or hunch down the street. You're a classic tight-ass—and this tightness in your hips can predispose you to lower back pain, from a minor ache all the way to an inability to support your legs while running.

You already know that tight abs help to protect and protect your back, but it's also important to keep your hip muscles loose. Hamstrings (which run from your rear end to the backs of your knees) and hip flexors (which run from your pelvis down to the front of your knees and from your

inner spine to below your hips) can, when tight, lessen the normal curve of your lower back and change the orientation of your pelvis, causing pain.

The remedy is to stretch these muscles, not build them. How to know when they need stretching?

"If you're lying flat, I should be able to bring one of your legs almost 90 degrees straight up," explains Dr. Michael Steader, an orthopedist at Albany Medical Center. "If I can only get you to 60 degrees, then you have some hamstring tightness. Or if I pick up one leg and before we get to 60 degrees, your other leg starts to lift off the table, then your hip flexors are too tight." *Ow!* —*Ros Mennin*



To loosen the hamstrings, try 1, a modified hurdler's stretch: Extend one leg in front of you while bending the other, pressing your feet against the inside of the extended leg; lean forward for twenty to thirty seconds. In another approach 2, lie on the floor, grab the outside of one leg below the knee, and pull it toward your chest for thirty seconds.

For stretching the hip flexors, use 3, the same routine with two differences: Lie on a table and grab the back of one knee and pull it toward your chest while the other leg hangs off the table. Or, while standing 4, extend one leg backward from your hip, grab it a good stretch. Officially, this is called the hip extension.

DEPT. OF GOOD NEWS

Red, White, and Bluenoses

Even the salutary effect of white wine has been unjustly neglected, even as red wine is celebrated as a tonic against coronary-artery disease! So it would seem. The Joslin Heart Research Foundation recently completed a small controlled study in which high-cholesterol subjects spent consecutive months drinking a Cabernet, drinking a chardonnay, and teetotaling. While levels of cholesterol didn't change, the free radicals that catalyze it into artery-clogging poisons were reduced by 15 percent among red-wine drinkers and 24 percent among white-wine drinkers. Similarly, the blood's clotting ability was reduced 16 percent by the red and 20 percent by the white, further reducing the likelihood of heart attack. Spends too in that the white's benefit derived from its higher levels of catechins, an especially strong class of antioxidants among the polyphenols—chemicals thought to make waxes in general beneficial.

So far, wine drinkers of all persuasions rejoice. Meanwhile, the camp de grace for bluenoses has arrived in the government's new dietary guidelines, which concede for the first time that moderate consumption of any alcoholic alcohol is good for the heart—and maybe the soul as well. *Sailed.*

R&D

Scent of a Stogie

EMBRACING the logic of pheromones and subliminal cues, the fragrance industry is pushing a new theme: Don a desirable natural odor and you'll acquire its associations. What Giorgio's Red for Men, for instance, and you'll channel the psychic energy of the entire Sequoia National Forest. Gaudouin Roux, a fragrance designer for everyone from Giorgio to Calvin Klein, sent chemists to suck red Sequoia air through a "molecular trap" and then to create it in the lab. Havana, now from Armani, uses the same technology to evoke the smell of Cuban cigars and rum. Or you could just have a stogie and a shot before you go out.



MISSONI

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Don't Blame It on Yoko

MY GRANDMOTHER was hounded by a rational gentleman during a bedside visit in 1934. (She survived!) I loved Maria Grace, but believe me, if you'd had a boyfriend, you'd have used it as her too. My father's sprawling family was reunited by that nap woman, who had a black belt in passive aggression and was once child abuse long before it hit Cuckoo. A master of manipulation who could weep at will, a cornball sidekick of hysterical

symptoms, she specialized in the guilt trip and made sure all of us were frequent fliers. Growing up as such a family supplied me with anger, doesn't really swirling, for Cheryl's Wilma, the discerning female, and her secret shares, the passive, gilded milk. We buried Maria Grace a couple of years ago, but I swear she's alive and well and appealing herself in pods in a basement somewhere—and mopping my friends.

An accomplished, creative man I know recently wed a woman who put a Walcott death grip on his life, dragging his career, alienating his friends and family, and driving him to drink. Everyone near and far can see her destructive handwork—everyone but him. Another man, after fourteen years' and more serene as such a woman, finally divorced her. When they separated, he was shocked that not a single friend expressed anything but relief. "Why didn't anyone tell me?" he wondered.

But are such men scary? Do friends let friends marry Yoko Cuckoo? How do you tell somebody that he's involved with an emotional wreck and if he isn't careful, well, the Beatles will break up? Are you obliged to tell him he's courting catastrophe? What's your responsibility? Sure, it hurts to see that caregoing, stand-up-bud of yours sleeping with the Death Star, but it's too easy to blame it all on Yoko. There's something in such men that wants not a life partner but a probation officer. Certainly this preoccupied

our belated, touchy-feely age makes men feel guilty for their natural aggression. So with our testosterone reserves depleted and women drained, if not volunteering, to express our aggression for us, somebody has to step up the family jewelry. When the *Scarface* New-Age Guy hands over his repressed animal self to a spouse and gets the Inappropriate New-Age Gal, does he have a right to sing the blues?

In Plato's Symposium, we're told that we humans once possessed two heads, four arms and four legs but were split in half by the gods and scattered forever to seek our other half—to complete ourselves. Opposites attract—it's a classic, predictable, maybe even ideal. The head seeks the heart, the mind of the scientist seeks the soul of the artist. The trouble starts when instead of learning from our mates and benefiting from our differences, we stagnate and let our alter egos do our dirty work for us. I'll be your screwup so you can feel virtuous and superior; you be my arrogant, considerate, condescending so I don't have to have one. Allow me to have my boss in the other and I'll let you stay on the ground in the control tower. And neither of us will complain when you fly me into a mountain.

So it's complicated. Maybe there's nothing to say when friends marry Yoko. You keep your counsel and hope for the best. Then, one day, your friend tells you he's having problems, considering separation. How do you handle it? Revealing your delight may vent your resentment (his depresses your friend). Here's a warning: For those of us who, when the breakup is announced, might be tempted to pelt an A congratulatory bouquet, wait! I know had the opportunity after a friend's marriage broke up to take it to the hoop and air his feelings directly to the estranged wife, whom nobody could stand. "I'm delighted to hear you broke up," he gleefully confessed to the exasperated ex, "because you're a perfect slut and he deserves better." Soon after, the estranged couple got back together. His friend never spoke to him again. ■

POP WISDOM

Does Smoking Pot Make Men Grow, Uh, Tits?

In 2003, a pair of doctors from Harvard Medical School reported that some of their male patients who were heavy marijuana users had developed unusually breasts. Other than their expanded cup sizes, these men, in their mid-twenties, were fit and healthy. The physicians ruled out the usual causes of this embarrassing condition, known as gynecomastia: tumors, hormonal imbalances, aging, and, of course, plain old dick. They concluded that the only cause was the weed altering a chemical in pee—tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC—which is structurally similar to estrogen, the hormone that promotes female sex characteristics.

Subsequent research has left doctors in a lurch, however. A small survey of U.S. Army soldiers failed to find any link between male marijuana use and gynecomastia. Later studies of eleven lab rats showed THC—but researchers speculated that mimicking a plant's estrogen that occurs naturally in cannabis might stimulate breast growth in men.

According to Dr. Glenn B. Braunstein, an endocrinologist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, 30 to 35 percent of clinically treated male homosexuality appears related to drug use, diet and otherwise. (One percent of men who take Tamoxifen for estrogen develop gynecomastia.) But the problem has so many causes, says Braunstein, that it's often difficult to pinpoint why a man develops a chubbly chest. While the mighty bong lit might be to blame, you can't rule out the Sara Lee pound cake that inevitably follows.

—TIMOTHY GAY

BODDINGTONS.

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Anonymous

I Strike Again

This month, Walter Shapiro gladly ghosts this space, as the most powerful writer of our time does the Republicans

HE WAS JUST A REGULAR JOE, looking seriously dark on the streets of Annapolis, Iowa, in deep winter. Even though his resonant wind-off-the-prairie voice said, "I'm one of you," his deep hoarse nasal (as simultaneously announced, "I live in that other world. I've gotten out. And you, the schmucks of Iowa, will always be stuck here.")

We shook heads. After a fashion, The hardbodie in the threefold suit, the beginning of politics. But with the Old Man, it had to be different. First came the wary look, his eyes checking to make sure you got the picture—everything but his politics came from the left side. He would grab an eardrum all left arm with his good hand, briefly making a fist around your fingers. A professed right hand was a coded mode. You were reading his wear wounds. Or worse, despite the Old Man's thirty years of service in the Senate and his three stints for the White House, you were too much of a rubie to get it. How he had given his right arm for this country that kept rejecting him.

The Bates Trust back in Washington warned me on the road to hear the speech, so never his cadence, so Do Something About It. I was on loan from Roddy Wynn—the Old Man's best friend from the Senate—so they figured I would have not only the imprimatur of the Plymouth Confession but also the bonds of tribal loyalty. As a frazzled Reese Scott, the campaign manager, put it to me in a hit-the-busches-on-D-day

The *smack* inside Rob Dröf's '96 campaign. This note swings both ways.

tone, "He's fucking it up again. But this time, we won't let him tell himself like in '88. No excuses. Remember the mantra: 'Message and motivation.'"

As the big sign outside city limits begs, *Annapolis is 'the Home of Grant Wood'*. The gray-haired form stood waiting in the consanguine center was straight out of *America on Gothic*, except that the man had checked their preferences at the door. The Old Man was not, as I had feared, a total deviant. The speech was worse—no seat, no context. His off-the-cuff riffs were psychologically fascinating but politically devastating. Forbes Foreman was flooding the Iowa streets with ads that said, "The government won't let seventy-two-year-old pilots fly. Shouldn't America demand the same safety standards for the White House?" But here was Senator Rob Dröf taking pains to remind voters that he here. Doughty Eisenhower had been president when Dröf first came to Congress. Why not go all the way and boast about his friendship with General Gort?

Even his efforts to quader earned a better edge. Somewhere, the Old Man had gotten the idea of carrying around a note card with the Second Amendment, in Russian the Gun Note. Did he put it in the left pocket of his dark suit, where he could easily reach it? No sense, Rob. He had to make a hand for himself by placing it in the right breast pocket of his starched white shirt. Yep, there, four paces with his left hand before he finally retrieved it. Each awkward groping was symbolically an admission: "Rob Dröf feels his own pain."

After the speech, I headed for the staff van. But the press secretary Elton Winfield (known by the campaign nickname "Winfield"), instead scooped me into the Lincoln Town Car ferrying the candidate. Just the three of us, plus the local driver, on the long ride to Waterloo. I was nervous about how the Old Man would react to me. He couldn't have met too many slick-thirteen Chinese Americans in his years chairing the Ag Committee. As a rule, my people didn't lobby him much on soybean subsidies.

The first fifteen miles passed in near silence, the Old Man reading his news clips

SOMETIMES GETTING AHEAD
MEANS GOING FOR
THE THROAT.



WASHINGTON, D.C. ATLANTA DALLAS CHICAGO RICHMOND BALTIMORE

OUR MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE

and I was. A little beyond Coney Island, I'd Crepe her half-smart toward me and said, "Chong, Kim she's a good grandma, huh?" So he had been teased "No my mother's side," I replied. Waiting his cue, I could tell he was rolling back his eyes. "Great man, I suppose. Spoke to a joint union. Nixon told him. Never could see a ' ' pause there the work. "So you're here to untie me huh? There we was back the Mustang?"

Remembered that the Old Man and I had, after a fashion, bonded. Mustangs definitely broke it in to give the candidate the latest bad-news bulletin—always a risky game in this about-faceless campaign. "Scratch," he said with a slight manner. "You might want to take a peek at the latest numbers. They're ours. Eisenhower's landed off at 26 percent." It was a brief message, a quick left turn on the driveway away from the Old Man's car. He had returned to work. Doll stated the numbers before giving way to a gusty chuckle. "Good ol' Ike Rape. He's huh." The Old Man was shouting over the plight of Gmhor Rape, the Sexon's answer to Khabosh Crane, who Doll snobbishly believed was his real dad. "So present. Dick huh. As you see, so shall we Rape."

I wish the Old Man in the car, I couldn't ask himself about what really bothered me the decision to shut down the last speech of the day in Waterloo. A Waterloo dash line meant that half the reporters (everyone in the campaign called them peeps, police shorthand for criminals, or perps) would build their leads around cheap-shot Napoleon piers. As we pulled into the parking lot of the Waterloo civic auditorium, the Old Man suddenly roared and his right eye began to twitch uncontrollably. My first fearful diagnosis: a coronary. But Dr. W was pointing with his left hand at a banner on the building as he growled, "World-dam source news, huh? Spase no expense. Get a big perp!" Then he said, "a whole hand-lead second brother! Dapin' in the word as the auditorium locates production of the showbizry local show The Comedy Club."

I don't remember a word of the Waterloo speech, a response undecipherably shared by the crowd. Afterwards, maybe fifty reporters—brown noses, bald heads, like medieval lawyers—surrounded the Old Man for a secret word

Core was the collegial we're-all-against-the-mood of the poems of the Hill or even the in-the-delinquent he might be president tone that accompanied a winning campaign. The Old Man's blood was in the water—and this was stark hat time. "What do you say to Farmworth's charge today that you voted for a message abundant in the congressional gym?" ("It was part of an ambitious reconstruction bill.") To light of Farmworth's asks do you have a valid drivers license? ("Used to Ask him about his helicopter. He yachts.") To your campaign still viable? ("Our keep wills have me at it.")

Oil was \$10.00 a barrel in Winter. The carload had costed, less than a week before the auction, that we had fallen below 50 pence—below what the press considered life support level.

[illegible]

Of course, the Friday night before the caucus, was where a lot changed. A word morning in the obligatory Q-and-A session after Dool's speech. The Old Man—Richard Nixon's party chairman in '72—actually got a time-warp question about Winnetka. The candidate even walked a high out of his twenty-year-old joke: "Winnetka? There's been no cash off."

Afterward, Minefield rode on the prison bus to open the perps on the latest Iowa parole—we had, praise the Lord, stabilized in the upper twenties but Farnsworth was still running

strong. So it was just the Old Man and me in the backseat of the Lincoln. Don't was in a strangely talkative mood, not so much chatting as getting voice to an interior monologue. "Farnsworth," he said with an audible sneer. "Gotta be stopped. Had a nice easy Daddy Warbucks World class Debutel no phone."

The Old Man purchased his degree for the flat tax with a sound that was somewhere between a whistle and a brass clarinet. Then he veered off into monologues: "Wassup, he said 'Gee me thinking about ya. Close call.' I didn't have the heart to tell the candidate that I started kindergarten a month after Nixon resigned. But I had read up on Devil's eggs reelection campaign to the Senate—his double account victory over Will Ties, a country doctor."

named congressman "Will Thye," the Old Man continued as if reading my mind: "Good man. Had to define the difference. Maybe went too far. Abortion. Not my kind of issue. Tell what it takes. Farmworth? Whaddya think?"

Dodd had survived that post-War-rings election for one cynical reason: a vicious whisper campaign that accused Troy not only of having abortions but of actually performing them. Now the Old Man was asking me whether we should use the same type of tactics to help Governor Romney.

"Serious? I have an idea," I responded to what I now regard as my job Magruder voice. "We've never seen Farnsworth's wife Beanna. Maybe, just maybe, she's a secret financial backer of Planned Parenthood. It would be The New Jersey hunt country and all that."

I spent the last three days of the Iowa campaign in the Des Moines Marriott, ostentatiously bedridden with the flu.

"Here you're quitting." Drell said in surprise. "Your choice, but just what

you unlocked me." The Old Man then did something that was harder for him than for most people—he asked for something. "Aw, c'mon. That is ridiculous—you've got to be with me." ■



POLICE

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MONEY TALKS

Christopher Byron

How Healthy Is Your HMO?

For members and investors alike, it's hard to get a straight answer

A RECENT COVER STORY in *Time* earned the headline **WHAT YOUR DOCTOR CAN'T TELL YOU** and offered a devastating profile of Health Net, one of the largest HMOs in California. It concluded, among other things, that many HMOs—Health Net included—are earning their profits by short-changing their patients on such costly, though often necessary, services as diagnostic testing.

But that's not the question: How financially sound is your HMO in the first place? That's an important not only if you're looking for a health-care provider

Since 1992, Standard & Poor's has published "independent" ratings. But until last summer, the best rating that a company could receive under the "voluntary" system was a BBB+, or no better than its average S&P rating. To qualify for a higher rating, a firm had to pay S&P a fee—a list of unimpressive services that was discontinued in a 1999 report by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners as a form of quasi extortion.

S&P has since dropped this approach and now gives the full range of ratings—from AAA to down to CCC+ for involuntary coverage. But the company still sells voluntary coverage to insurers—which often leads to an improvement in their ratings. S&P's managing director of insurance ratings, Mark Puccio, acknowledges the arrangement but says companies pay because of the service they receive in return. "It's sort of like tipping a waiter," he says. "Other, less savvy analysts spring more readily to mind."

Only one company I email but gussy Florida outfit called Weiss Ratings, provides financial grades free of any possible conflict of interest. The company charges the consumer, not the insurance companies, for its ratings. Its reports are moderately paced—no more than say-so authority than the General Accounting Office has found. Weiss's ratings to be more precise and reliable than those of any of its larger rivals, including S&P, Moody's Investors Service, and A.M. Best, is sporting credible shade.

Unfortunately, however, much longer Weiss will be around in anybody's guess. That's because the company is now in a fight for its life with none other than Health Net, which is suing for libel. The company claims Weiss behaved recklessly in giving it a D+ rating in 1994. Weiss says its evaluation—the publication of which helped to coincide with merger talks involving Health Net—was based on a computerized analysis

of Health Net's own publicly filed financial data. The case will probably go to trial in California later this year.

Whatever the merits of this case, the whole subject of financial health in the HMO sector is obviously of great importance. HMOs are, after all, the future of American health care, and companies are rushing to public up one another in hopes of achieving economies of scale. With widespread profit margins come rising stock prices, which enable successful HMOs to diversify yet more boldly, spawning further merger growth.

Sound familiar? A similar dynamic drove the savings and loan industry in the 1980s, as thrills used their own escalating stock prices to help finance an ever-widening array of shaky investments. When the game ended anywhere from \$20 billion to \$50 billion had evaporated, and Americans found the prospect of diminished economic growth well into the next century.

Weiss Ratings now grades 475 HMOs, covering 90 percent of all enrollment in the field. Its ratings model uses a computer-driven analysis of three hundred financial variables examined through some seventy-five different ratios to come up with ratings ranging from A+ (possible) to F (failing).

Weiss uses its multi-colored-capital ratios to look at whether the company's balance sheet capital is adequate to cover its exposure to both a major site and a severe economic downturn. Last spring, I warned in this space that a recession could well materialize in 1995, and that predictor looks to be on target, which makes the Weiss measure quite timely if you're about to join an HMO.

Fortunately, any of the thousand largest HMOs in the country have an A or B rating for their solidly padded capital, which means, in the Weiss scheme of things, that they are strong enough to ride out almost any economic turbulence in the year ahead. The best-capitalized of all large HMOs? CaliforniaCare Health Plan. Health Net, on the other hand, is near the bottom, though it does appear to have improved its financial strength since Weiss's original report and now rates a gentleman's C.

Weiss also looks at an HMO's profitability and liquidity, the value of

the premiums it has written in relation to its net worth, the percentage of income paid out in salaries, and so on. Add up all the variables and CaliforniaCare, with more than \$1 billion in assets, looks the strongest of the largest HMOs. It's got more than twice the capital needed to weather an economic downturn—and so does.

In the New York market, which has lagged other areas in the growth of HMOs but is now being aggressively targeted by the industry, the biggest independent HMO is U.S. Healthcare.

With 450,000 members, Weiss rates it an A-. The next-largest, Calforn Health Plans, with 355,000 members, gets only a C.

Altogether, some 13.6 million Americans belong to HMOs carrying a Weiss rating of B+ or better. As for the other thirty million, well, if you're among them—or, worse still, if you happen to belong to one of the forty-four HMOs rated D or lower—is just the time both you and the economy get sick, what else is there to say? Good luck. ■

How They Rate

HMO	state	rating	members
Kaiser Permanente Health Plan Inc.	CA	A+	4,800,000
CaliforniaCare Health Plan	CA	A	3,000,000
Blue Shield of California	CA	A	2,770,000
HealthNet	CA	C	2,680,000
Preferred Health Group/Plan Inc.	CA, CO, IL, IN, MI, NY, OH, PA, TN, TX, VA	A-	1,110,000
PPWP Inc.	CA, CO, IL, NY, TN, TX, VA	B+	850,000
ProHealth of California Inc.	CA	B	600,000
U.S. Healthcare Business Enterprises	CA	A-	700,000
Preferred Health Group/Plan of California Inc.	CA	B	550,000
Blue Cross Association of California	CA	B	500,000
Prime Health Plan East Inc.	CA	A-	400,000
Prime Medical Group Inc.	CA	B	400,000
Western Health Plan Inc.	CA, CO, IL, IN, MI, NY, OH, PA, TN, TX, VA	A-	350,000
ProHealth Health, California	CA	B	340,000
Humana National Plan Inc.	CA, FL	A-	310,000

The listed Weiss Safety Rating, an overall appraisal of financial health, for the nation's largest HMOs.

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Mike Lupica

Just One of the Guys

When Magic Johnson returned to basketball, the NBA truly came back to life. So did he.

THERE WAS A TIME not too long ago in a place that can only be called Cable America when we watched Earvin "Magic" Johnson, recently diagnosed as HIV-positive and retired from basketball, arrive at a Lakers game in the great Western Forum, smiling and drinking in the applause. The event was more about pity than anything else. It was one of

the saddest things I have ever seen in sports. The cheer that night was indeed like a eulogy. No one knew that better than Magic Johnson.

Now it is a Tuesday night four and a half years later, and Magic Johnson is back in a Lakers uniform, three pounds heavier at a time when we were all afraid that he would be three pounds lighter. And on this night, he would thrill us with an electrifying performance against the Golden State Warriors in his first regular season game in the NBA since the 1991 Finals against Michael Jordan and the Bulls. (And maybe it figured, in this theatrical American life of his, that Johnson's second game would be against Jordan and the Bulls.)

Before he played the first game, I talked to him on the telephone. I know I don't have my NBA tape yet," he said. "Means I'm going to have good nights, bad nights go up and down. I'm gonna need about six weeks to really get where I want to be." Then he went out and was just two rebounds short of having double figures in points, assists, rebounds. He seemed to forget it all on that night. His voice, his movement, his weight, his age, which happens to be thirty-one. At a time when he was supposed to be gone, he walked out of the past and played young.

For Riley, his old Lakers coach, woke him up late that morning with a playful phone call—playful as Riley gets—delivered in a grave voice: "If you're in shape, Riley old man, you're good. You would have gotten the triple double."

The second game, against the Bulls, Johnson was guarded, guarded hard by Dennis (Red Panda) Rodman. Early in the game, Magic drove to the basket and Rodman hit him with a forearm and then gave him a shove for good measure, so if it says "Not so fast, Papa."

"It was good for me," Johnson says of the Bulls game. "Dennis made me play better. Basketball's not just running up and down the court, it's getting hit. It's having to carry somebody on your back. The whole time I was out there I felt like I was carrying Dennis. And Michael, he keeps yelling at Dennis. He likes going. Let's go hit his ass in shape."

And it isn't just opponents taking shots at Magic's age or Renaissance physique, it's his teammates. "Oh, they are already calling me 'old man,'" he says. "Old man this, old man that. Nick Van Elm is the worst. 'Come on, old man,' he says, can't you keep up with us? The other day I showed up in my old Lakers sweats. I couldn't get used to the baggy ones these guys wear. They just didn't feel right to me. So I went back to my old ones, which we used

to wear a lot tighter. Oh, man, you should have heard them then. They're all screaming. 'Where'd you buy those sweats old man, in the 1980s?'"

He laughs and continues: "Now they don't like to stretch before practice. I've got to stretch, okay? For I start stretching, and here's Van Elm standing over me, yelling to the other guys, 'Somebody come over and hit Magic up or he isn't going to be able to go today.'"

All the old things had to new to him. Four and a half years after his retirement because of HIV, he is once again that kid he so desperately wanted to be, one of the guys. "Let me tell you something," Johnson said to me the Monday before he took his jersey down from the rafters. "Ball didn't miss me nearly as much as I missed ball."

I don't know how long this Magic moment will last, and I have gotta so know how pretty well I don't think he knows. He just goes out with an excuse, you never see how long it will last. Michael Jordan talks about a couple of years. Maybe the Lakers will sign Shaquille O'Neal after this season, and Magic Johnson, who came in with Kareem, will go out with Shaq. One thing is certain though: Ball missed Magic as much as he missed ball.

There was no sadder sports story than his HIV announcement in 1991. Ask any body, and they will tell you where they were when they heard the news. It was this kind of day it was in fact supposed to be the beginning of one long and incredible sadness. You wondered about Magic that day. You always did. How much of the smile was real, how much of it was Earvin playing the part of Magic? He always said, "Don't confuse the two guys, there's Earvin, there's Magic." He would sit around as if Magic lived only in his head, when the applause began. Now, in the years since HIV, it seems as if there is no distinction anymore.

Of course there has always been a certain amount of cheering, bullsh*t to him. There is with all celebrities. Jordan has it, too—don't kid yourself. But you give big guys some room. You clear out a bit.

So it is with Magic. That first week back, he said he was returning because he wanted his small children to see him play. He said that ultimately his wife, Cookie, made the decision for him after they had prayed. I am sure it will be true for Earvin till to see his father doing what he does best. I hope he does pray that the real reason Magic is back is that he feels he never should have left.

"I don't blame anybody except myself," Magic says now. "Don't blame the doctors. But I never should have left in the first place, and I know that now."

BY THE THIRD GAME, Johnson had what he calls his "happy-hop" back. It is that high-stepping run he shows you when he is pushing it up on the break: this is Magic playing ball as if he wanted to make only he can hear. And the other players are simply expected to get with the beat.

The game was against the Utah Jazz. When Johnson made a brief postgame comeback in 1991, Karl Malone of the Jazz had been outspoken on his concerns about Johnson's condition and about possible mismanagement of the virus in a game. Malone was saying only what the rest of the league was thinking, but talking about Magic like that didn't help him very much. The two men have since made up.

So here it was after all the years away, after trying a comeback and then quitting, after a brief, distressing living as Lakers coach, here was Magic Johnson, HIV-positive, thirty pounds heavier, at the age of thirty-one, with the ball, against Malone. He was on his way to twenty-one points that night, six assists, seven rebounds, another victory in the most unappealing comeback sports has ever seen and *way* over set. Here was Magic Johnson, alive in a way that only basketball has ever made him feel alive, also when people thought he might be dead, and he was going to score on Karl. The Mikesian moment.

The Lakers cleared out. You always give big guys some room. Magic backed him in and started to go to his left, now the lane, because he can shoot the baby hook from in there with either hand. Malone went for it, and then Johnson made a lightning spin toward the basket—quick even with all the extra weight—and then his right-handed hook was in the air. Shuck.

He turned and ran up the court and allowed himself a smile much smaller than we are used to—the pocket-size version—and the fans in the Great Western Forum hit him with the kinds of cheers he understood. This was his run, and he was never allowed to lose, in his place, with his team. In fact, Johnson, the retired, retired particularly interested in how long it would all last.

The message was in his game. Hell, the message is his game. Nobody has ever understood basketball better or appreciated it more. Make any judgments you want about Johnson's life, the lifestyle that got him the virus in the first place. No one, as his game, has ever been a better ambassador for what is supposed to be good and right about sports. This is the very sports it is supposed to look, he always said. This is the way it is supposed to feel. If there is one thing that passes off sports fans as much as anything, it's this. We seem to care more than the players do.

Not with Magic. Magic was his own.

He didn't want anybody's pity. He didn't want to be on the president's AIDS commission. He didn't want to be a martyr or a role model. Magic just wanted to be Magic. There is always a certain amount of selfishness to the greatest athletes, the most spectators. Sometimes there is even meanness. That wasn't Showtime at this moment with Karl Malone. Magic didn't want to put just the ball through the basket, he wanted to put Malone through the basket—don't think he didn't. Better than anyone else who has ever played, Magic Johnson knows the score. ■

Take that, Dennis! Not bad for a fat old man.



Mister Lonely Hearts

Why would a fifty-year-old comic genius like Steve Martin want to spend the rest of his life alone? He wouldn't. Know any nice girls? BY MARTHA SHERRILL

IT WAS A NIGHTMARE THAT HE SHAKES—finally. It's his own scenario of hell, an ugly vision that plays in the dark, swampy part of his mind. We are drinking many cups of sea-fine Earl Grey for stimulation, then champagne for calming down—and sitting in a golden silk corner of the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, a place of sunlit, poolside decks, and overly fancy restaurants with movie stars getting out.

Steve Martin is loose and relaxed, fresh-faced an appearance with his thongus. There is nothing overly fancy about him. He is wearing a navy-blue knit sweater. Reading glasses hang on a cord around his neck. "I feel like I'm in an eleven period," he says, "and I'm fifty." I begin to worry. "This is my last viable decade," he says. And I worry some more. The lonely-death scenario. The pathetic old L.A. guy scenario. I could feel a coming Martin has everything all other men could want—talent, money, respect, freedom, fame, a brilliant art collection, a cast of loyal old



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW ECCLES

IN THE HYPHOS, a long passage to one of his secret rooms, a painting, a sculpture, a tapestry.

friends and decent young girlfriends. But something's troubling him.

He can see the future, so though it were one of his paintings on a wall before him, it is a vision of hell, as complicated and horrifying as one by Hieronymus Bosch. As empty as an Edward Hopper, as self-absorbed as a late Rembrandt.

Love, Martin has been learning, is an idiotic thing.

In this downtown scenario, it is ten years hence. Martin is turning early 35. Then, presumably, he will have thirty-five middle-aged lady bits in the car and might be steering in *Father of the Bride VI*. But worse than all that, his, for want of a better word, divorce. Another bear divorce. That time, he has a three-year-old child living in some other part of the city.

He can see it vividly, he says. Watching his friends Lorne Michaels and Paul Simon marry and start new families must cause even more anguish. He could fall in love, many agree, and then something could go terribly wrong—or even a little wrong. Love, as he has been learning lately, is an idiotic, unpredictable thing. "I don't want that. I don't want that," he says. In his mind's eye, the nightmare is materializing.

"It's difficult when you're twenty or thirty," he says. "I mean, it's still painful, but there's something terrible about it happening at 30. So the next relationship has to be it. And I have to make sure it's really, really right."

What to do? The following describes Steve Martin's midlife plan of self-renewal—the grand overhaul and full embrace of a middle class—divided by me over several weeks of interviews. E-mail and talks with friends. For the last year, every brain cell has been firing as he has contemplated the theme of romance. The whole man-woman thing he seems desperate to figure it out—before it's too late. "I've been running out with it means to be a bachelor," he says. "Is this what I want? It's possible, you know that I could never meet someone."

STEP NUMBER ONE: KNOW THAT YOU DON'T KNOW In the mornings, Martin still has to take around the corners of L. A. Afternoon, he's at home—as we are now—in the new house he moved into a year ago. What does he do all day long? "I don't do anything," he says seriously, as I look seriously, and a little sadly. "I sit around and read and answer the phone. He is crying out to be a phony. And, indeed, Martin seems to have no routine in general. He has the very reputation of performers.

The phone, "I can't talk," he whines, but seriously. "I'm doing an interview. Can I call you back?"

He brings a tiny into the living room with a pot of green tea. Even the way he sits it down seems earnest, deliberate, a little downward, but it would be wrong to laugh. He builds a fire in the fireplace, with great purposefulness—it's 30 degrees outside—and sinks into a big white armchair, his back to the roaring blaze. His face beads up with sweat. He takes off his sweater—the same one he wore yesterday at 30. He begins to talk about things of interest to him. What would those be? The nuances of human behavior and big landscapes—love, death, aging. He has a terrific need to figure things out. And unlike most artists, he is an intense listener. He knows forward, as though English weren't his first language, as though he

needed to breathe your words through the pores of his skin, and his face locks into an all-absorbing gaze.

"What were you saying about men when they turn forty?" he asks. "You suggested something. What happens to them? What did you mean by that?"

You can ask about his career or his art collection—

Hoppers, Picassos, DeStobberns—and he will answer you definitely. But, when the conversation shifts back to what's been on his obsessive, hungry mind, he comes alive. Before going into show business, he wanted to be a philosophy professor, so exploratory thinking suits him.

"I've had these incredible revelations lately on how completely stupid I've been—in terms of relationships with women," he says. "And now I've dated a few women, and I've talked with them about it. It's like women have a network of knowledge. Things only women know and men don't. It's kept from men, and it works every time."

Pondering the vagaries of love seems to have opened his mind, in new things pour in.

"It's kept from them because we're so stupid about it," he continues—and he's talking about the matriarchal nature of the game, the little numbers that one sex can pull on the other—we can't believe it's actually happening. Some women I've dated don't have it at all—don't even know how to do it. Other know about it, used to do it, don't do it anymore. Others don't even know they have it and do it like, endlessly. Are I sounding macho?"

STEP NUMBER TWO: GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO FALL APART Upon meeting him at the Four Seasons, I was surprised by his candor, his immediate ability to dive into an intimate conversation. A number of people, friends of his, had said that he was tough to talk to and uncomfortable with strangers. "He can be positively incoherently," one person told me. Another described him as "socially autistic." "He's almost rude," and another "No, he's rude."

Was it possible that he had changed? And so quickly? "He has become more open," explains close friend Nora Ephron, the writer and director "Very open and vulnerable and clear."

He talked quite easily about his divorce from actress Victoria Tennant in 1993 and told me how his heart had been broken not by a younger woman. The last two years have been "miserable," he said. "I feel obviously been thrown, wandering into a period of introspection and regeneration, the rather than finding myself pleased—or neglected—I was growing a little confused, particularly since Martin began discussing what he'd been reading lately. He was after all, a certified intellectual, as evidenced by the man who defined postmodern comedy and influenced a generation of stand-up performers. "A phenomenon," so Lorne Michaels put it.

Now, overwhelmed by sadness and a middle crisis in full throttle, he had been reduced to modest psychology exercises and stung in a corner of a Beverly Hills hotel and talking me about it.

"I am not a depressed person," Martin says, "but I was pretty gloomy for about a year. I read books. Lots of books.

From the ridiculous to the sublime. From the simple to the very sophisticated. I was in the bookstore, and I was watching the shelves, like—and he makes a sorrowful, pained look—I was kind of. And I saw this little book. *How to Succeed in Love*. I go, okay. So I picked up some other books on the subject, all so embarrassing to talk about. And I read this book, and it's like, some fundamental. It's got big paragraphs as bold and poems. I was like, sure, but a spike directly to the issue. You know, it's like why carry around make people cry, because they are right on. What we're thinking and feeling is usually not very sophisticated.

"Hence how naive and stupid I was," he says. "This little book taught me something so fundamental. Having the job is what makes you."

He hit continued at my jaw descended into a gape. He had read a book called *Obscene Love* and he says, "I picked it up and went, This is not for me, and then, when I read it, I realized I was."

Then, was *Getting the Love You Want* and *Cave of the Soul*, both of which he loved, and *The Drama of the Gifted Child*—I recently related," he says. Then, while discussing Mrs. An-

thon Martin. When Mrs. Anthon was, he became excited. "It was now revelatory. I couldn't believe it. It's written in a very simple, pop way, but it's something I would never have dreamed up on my own—or figured out in my entire life."

STEP NUMBER THREE: BUY A DOG Unlike his old house, which was fairly cold and spare and modern and a shame to his art collection, his new place, a spectacularly comfortable, sprawling ranch house, is decorated warmly in a tasteful California old-Western hacienda style. There was no wall space for all his big, important art, as he put some of his things in storage and sold others. Now only a handful of understated masterpieces dot the walls. Each room looks out on a courtyard with a swimming pool and a garden. And Roger.

Before Roger. After Roger. This might be how the world will someday think of Steve Martin—for Roger's mere presence says as much as anything else. Roger is a yellow Labrador retriever and Martin's only regular companion these days—aside from Lucy and Deb, the two cats. He's a year old.

Right now, Roger is outside a glass door and looking in,

BABY, IT'S GOLD OUTSIDE.
Steve can't possibly overindulge in formal acts. But after dinner he has a "socially aware."



sort of screaming his nose around. He wants in. But after he wants in, he wants out. He is a lucky dog, because he keeps getting what he wants. He has a very wry, deadpan expression. Especially when being yelled at.

"Roger?"

"Roger!"

"I'm sorry to abuse," Martin says, "but I've been instructed to be firm with him."

This is their relationship. Steve has been instructed to be firm. Roger is running the show. Roger just wants Steve to make a lot about existence and relationships, including his relationship with Roger. Roger is warm, friendly, engaging. He likes everybody he meets and wags his tail and attachment but back end. Martin, while he's thinking so much these days, might be thinking he should be like Roger.

STEP NUMBER FOUR: REMEMBER, YOU HAVE FRIENDS He may have flawless comedia, timing, and great theatrical courage—he once roller-skated in a King Tut outfit on *The Tonight Show*—but now Martin seems vulnerable, exposed. "I have a great dumb area of my brain," he says. And a little love. He wants to be alone now, he says.

He goes down the hall to fetch a paper. He has pursued on some E-mail exchanges with Ephron. He wants to know me and make one dated December 15, 1997. "I think it's very awful that you now are trying to be alone and are spending a lot of time trying to find ways to find yourself for being alone."

"I'm not seeing any one person now in a permanent way," he says. "I'm seeing some people I like a lot and have really nice relationships with. It's a very tricky thing because you don't want to get too close, and yet you have to get a little close or it's no fun."

Yes, you have to get a little close or it's no fun at all. A movie star has to make his own way just like any other lonely single guy. I guess, the only difference being that Steve Martin is Steve Martin. Although this can be a problem too. The *Seinfeld* have worried that his inability to make friends with strangers could hamper his chances for happiness.

He went out to dinner recently with his close friend Ben in Gerson—who has produced three of Martin's movies, including his most recent comedy, *Sir Bile*—and Gerson's girlfriend, Gail Leverage. "And all night long, Steve was just hysterically funny," says Gerson. "And I said later, Steve, why can't you do that on a date? 'I just can't,' he said."

Gerson is just one of the many people Martin has to call upon for assistance and wisdom—even when he's alone. He's not that alone. People like Martin Short, Kevin Kline,

can, independent, logical side. And he has confidence that if he talks to people and thinks about it and reads about it, and if he's honest with himself and works hard, he can find true love.

STEP NUMBER FIVE: CHANGING THE PAST

He was born in Waco, Texas. He moved to California when he was five. His father never made it as an actor and sold real estate. The family lived in Garden Grove, California. They weren't a warm bunch. (See his play *WASP*.) Long silence at dinner.

Young Steve worked at Disneyland, selling guidebooks. Did stage work at birthday parties.

Partially shy. Studied philosophy at Long Beach State, then UCLA. Left school to write for *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*. Won an Emmy.

Left comedy writing to perform. Wrote a dark and obscure like *Lenny Bruce*. Had some rough lean years. Wrote a white act and played the harp. Made animals out of long, stringy balloons because loneliness. Worked even harder.

STEP NUMBER SIX: OPEN YOUR HEART Roger is scratching at the door again. He wants out. Roger wants Steve's special knowledge. "Roger," the comedian shouts. The low, booming, baritone Martin uses in a soul act—his worst performance—and Roger knows this. He can pick up at the sight of a bad recording on the backyard. He whines and barks once.

"Roger?"

Roger looks over at the comedian and stares at him a little coolly. "I'm sorry about this," Martin says. "But I think I need to be his out."

STEP NUMBER SEVEN: DON'T TRYING SO HARD Martin has a reputation in Hollywood for hard work and discipline, for generosity with other performers, for loyalty. He has made many movies with Carl Reiner, for instance, even though it's clear that Reiner is no Kurosawa. But he also moves on, regenerates, hasn't stayed unaltered with one genre—or one romance.

After he got into movies, in the late '70s, he moved from making edgy, original comedies like *The Jerk*, *Dad Mom Don't Worry*, and *Private* from Martin to taking on more serious acting roles, such as the ones in *Deadwood* and *Lap of Luck*, and to writing screenplays—the brilliantly witty

"Just working no longer makes you happy."

Tina Turner, Loretta Michaels, and Mike Nichols are close friends, as well as a cast of accomplished women in his age range: Ephron, painter Jennifer Bartlett, and novelist Barbara Moore. And when they aren't laughing on the sidelines, they seem determined to find the right woman for him. "There's a perception of Steve that he's this awkward, whispering, Andy Warhol, nonverbal character," says Short. "I think he's very normal and healthy."

He's very forthcoming about his relationships with women and very, very curious about getting it right. Says Moore: "He's nervous about this. Steve has a passion for

Reiner and *L.A. Story*—while keeping up regular appearances on *The Tonight Show* and *Saturday Night Live* and coming up with new stage acts, too—like *The Great Rhyme*—and, in the last five years, winning plays on the side.

"First, you work hard to prove you aren't a fish in the pan," Martin says. "Then you work to show other things you can do. And you write to show something else. It's showing and showing and showing. And pretty soon, you realize there's a kind of cynicism left, and it's a nuisance. And I realized that unless I was consciously working, I felt people wouldn't like me."

But didn't that give you something to get attention?" "No, it's not that," he says. "Something embarrassed me about that. I can't stand that. My own reason is just as embarrassing, but it's different. It's like, only in the last couple of years did I discover that I had anything to say. And before that, I was running on a sort of comedy energy—and the love of comedy. Comedy alone was enough. "And then, suddenly, the motive started to wear out. I used to get great satisfaction from my work, and it gave me my reason to respect myself. And when you start to lose that, it's very traumatic—because no longer does just writing make you happy."

Martin says he's taking more of his now, not working—to see what happens. He'll make his bed in the morning. And he'll answer the phone in the afternoon. "I'm going to stop myself from drinking," he says, "just to see what comes up, where it goes."

And at he stands at the threshold of trying to stop, rather than pondering existence, he often sees more than he thinks about. "I heard this great quote I think J.P. Don-

They set up house in Beverly Hills and an apartment in New York, and encouraged, excited friends, bought an car, traveled, inspired each other. "I think he means go, Victoria was a good one," says Ephron. "She really truly knew how brilliant and talented Steve is, and that was a focus of the marriage."

Martin continued to make a picture a year—which has been his habit ever since his first film career, in *The Kid*. An Alight in 1999—but he started writing again, too. *Kiss Kiss* in 1998 and *L.A. Story* in 1999 (in which Tennant also appeared). When he began toying with the idea of writing plays, Tennant was especially supportive.

His first attempt, was a comedy called *Phone in the Lap*. After the story of a fictional encounter between the young Picasso and the young Albert Einstein, which he says he had been writing to write all his life. The play, like his two screenplays, offers all the Martin trademarks: it merges his interests in art, magic, science, and philosophy—and runs an emotional range that goes from slapstick to ironic to schizoid. A few critics complained that it was too schizoid,

hand him unmanageable pain. And he will stand neither moving forward nor moving back. Then and only then, I will let myself from here to here [he indicates a vertical line from her neck to her abdomen], open my skin, and close him into me."

The character of Angie is a little brain in her honorific and also self-conscious. She is described as "twenty-five, off-beat-looking in her clothes, wears glasses, but that's because she's quietly hip. She's got something, but it's understated." She is also "very beautiful in her place."

"It's not unusual to really beautiful women," Martin explains. "Certainly not to women who are all alone. But I'm not attracted to women who even without makeup, are considered real drop-dead beauties. I find them sort of scary."

Since the Horowitz Kid, he has turned up a bunch of houses with several different women, most of them also beautiful in their place, as well as smart, serious, and aloof. At dinner parties, "Steve's dates never say anything," says Ephron. "I'd be grateful if he found a twenty-seven-year-old." Barlett says, laughing. "That would be in the old-

"When a friend Hines-Dawson?" Martin asks. "Nostalgia? (Smiles) Chocolate? It's really, really good. It's like a fudge-sorbet chocolate thing with no fat. No dairy at all." We head for the freezer. The tape recorder is full running, and after you can hear steps walking away as we shuffle out. Then a sniffling sound comes on. Louder and louder. Roger.

"He says he could imagine having children someday," Jennifer Bartlett says. "He just finished making his dog—and found a placeable."

"There's been an enormous change," says Moore. "Before, one was always liable to introduce him to a new person or to living along someone to discover who might, of all human things, turn out to be a fan. He didn't encourage anything casual or loose. But now that's all different."

"Oh, he's much more liberal now," says Brian Gossau. "Before, it was about his work and the art world. Learning more about art. Being about the art scene. It was always about more tangible stuff. Buying the right art. Being brilliant in another movie. Being in another hit. You know. And now he's trying to be reflective and find a balance."

"The swing set was in the yard when I bought the house, and it seemed fitting to see it down," Martin says. "Also, one never knows."

Tennant has moved on, returned to Martin—not to the Tom Sellick of *Autumn* but to a Warner Bros. executive, Rick Steinberg, eight years his junior. And a number of Martin's friends have new, young wives and new babies.

Martin has down again. He tells a story—a way to replace the unchangeable, the thing missing from his life. The thing he keeps thinking about but is now trying not to think about. In an email, he says Nora Ephron was describing a dinner party that she and Nick Pileggi, her husband, had gone to together. While they were at the table, somebody told a story that was "sort of chilling," says Martin, and Pileggi looked up at Pileggi. She was waiting for him to make eye contact.

"It's a perfect definition of compensation," Martin says. "You use of these moments that marriage is all about. Somebody says something, and you just look at your mate. You know to know that eye contact. Because you know exactly what they're thinking. It's so scary."

Roger stands at the glass door, looking out. Martin sits alone, his back to the fire. The light is soft, and the day is fading. The pool is turning a haunting blue. "Beautiful is coming. The paintings on the wall look beautiful, a little weird. So does the swing set."

"I'm not attracted to beauties. I find them SCARY."

leavy and setting is a way of carrying your deepest pain into history." He looks wise but his tragicomic smile and then laughs. "But now I realize that's not even cynical. Writing is a way of turning your pain into something. So it's a way of delivering it to someone else."

STEP NUMBER THREE: LEARN FROM MISTAKES How did all his love problems start? Martin offers another E-mail that he received from Ephron: "I'm not Steve's love adviser," she says later, when asked about them. "That would be the blandest thing he'd blind [Ephron was once married to Carl Bernstein.] I just was writing him back after he wrote me. "That second E-mail is even more devastating and also from December 1999. "Anyway, for what it's worth, you are the woman you're because you are still so hard up on women who aren't hard and sweet that among the ones who are a way of being with the ones who aren't. Do you know what I mean?"

I look up at Martin. Sweet and kind? Was your wife sweet and kind?

"My wife was strong and, uh, nice," he says. "But those wouldn't be the two words that would come to mind to describe her. No."

He met British actress Victoria Tennant while they were making *Mr. & Mrs. 1913*. After a few years together, they married in 1976. She was thirty-five. He was forty-one. And even though some would say there was a discrepancy in orders between them, by Martin's account, he married up. She was all the things he wasn't. Martin was shy around strangers and had not had a long-term relationship, aside from the time he'd spent dating Bernadette Peters. Tennant on the other hand, seemed to know how to become part of a couple early and was generous, quick to make friends. Martin had grown up middle class. Tennant was from a cultured family—and her godfather was Laurence Olivier. Despite Martin's refined sensibilities, he had never traveled much. Tennant spoke several languages, knew her way around the globe.

"We clicked and were married in Rome," says Martin, "because Victoria was the sort of woman who knew how to do complicated, impossible things like that."

or theory of activity life, but Martin's gift has always been to make the medieval accessible, and when Pileggi opened in Chicago in 1996, and later ran in Los Angeles and New York (where it is now), it was a commercial and critical success.

By the debut of Pileggi's second show, *White on Wall*, on location making a TV miniseries in 1999, she fell for an Australian television star (Pileggi refers to him as the Tom Sellick of Australia) and returned to Martin just long enough to announce she was leaving. Later, she would explain proudly to friends that though her marriage had been satisfying in some respects, Martin was emotionally unavailable. According to Martin, the divorce wasn't friendly and though the two share a circle of confidants they rarely speak.

But a woman, Tennant, he says, who devastated him. It was the subsequent relationship with Anne Heche, a twenty-five-year-old actress (the Horowitz Kid, as Martin's friends now refer to her), that locked him into a more reflective period. "It was a somewhat low affair," Martin says, and when the relationship ended, he found himself thirty-nine, alone again, and wondering what his life was all about.

"It was a middle crisis," says Moore. "It wasn't self-destructive or reckless or harmful to anyone else. It seemed to me. And it wasn't just about me, either, it was more complicated than that. The conventional male middle crisis just seems to be about sex and death. And I don't think it's about death. It's about life."

STEP NUMBER NINE: TURN MISTAKE INTO ART "I spent about a year recovering," says Martin, "and searching out myself and asking why things happened the way they did. I wrote a play about it. *Just for the Flying Lady*. Oh, I shouldn't have told you that. I should have said I made it up."

In *Flying Lady*, a magician appears onstage and levitates a young woman named Angie. At the end of the play after it's clear these two have loved each other and never quite trusted each other and caused each other the deepest sorrows, she says, "Now I want for a man my own age who will stand before me at arm's length and I will have him unmanageable joy, and he will not move forward, and I will have him. Then I will

at range. In any case, some of us are burned by his romantic desire, and we also burn the love."

"I have learned," says Martin, in his defense, "that as possible for a fifty-year-old to have the mentality of a twenty-five-year-old. And vice versa."

"I have a theory that I never hear about," says Moore. "It's a version of the principle that category misrepresents physiology; that the development of the human being mirrors the development of the human race. It seems to me that Steve is conducting his own category misrepresents physiology experiment in regard to women. He's crowding the first forty years of a man's sexual experience into a few years. Maybe when he's eighty he'll catch up to women my age. I just hope by then it's not too late."

Martin says that since his divorce he's had relationships with "a thirty-five-year-old, a fifty-year-old, and a twenty-six-year-old." He is determined not to go down in history as the Gay Who Dates Young Things. He agrees with Ephron that he provides toward two types: sweet and kind, and not. What's attractive about women who aren't sweet and kind? "It's volatile when you finally meet them," he says. "They have everybody else and love you!"

"Well, I just mean you're constantly in the process of being disappointed. Want to see the backyard?"

STEP NUMBER TEN: BE OPEN TO NEW THINGS In the backyard, the swimming pool has a basketball hoop at one end, and soccer nets are leaning up against a wall. There's a swing set in the corner, too—and a slide. Martin is playing Frisbee with Roger on the grass. He has a barefootness that's quite conventional, almost dorkish. He seems unassuming, reliable, old-fashioned. A vulnerability that might make other men seem pose: makes Martin genuine and dear. "It's the fared," says Moore. "You'll call it the middle of thought for help."

And there's something about his outfit—the sweater and khakis and sensible loafers—and his manner, and something about the house, too—the cozy rooms the fire going, the chairs—that's very inviting, very steady. As though he were waiting for a family to appear.



"I don't want power," says Tyson. "It's a drug. Power corrupts the soul."

He is no longer "the Beast," but Mike Tyson still has the ferocity to fight for his place in history—and his dignity
By Mark Kram

the tiger king

MIKE TYSON IS LISTENING to a grain of exotic information about the king-cobra eaters of Burma. He likes this kind of chat. "See again?" he asks. "I'm going deaf! Maybe it's all those years of listening to loud music. God's own truth, I don't hear too good." He narrows his meloxic eyes, leans in as if he were slipping a left hand. The cobra, so the story goes, rises to such a height that a cobra strikes the catcher's head, where a toucanet cannot be applied. When this happens, it is said, you find the shade of a vine, as black, and the like, a man. It's a metaphor, he is told, for the man's punch, the power of his return to the ring after three years in prison. "Oh," he says.

His eyes fade, and he slumps back on his white berle-ship sofa. Hey, sorry, so the cobra story isn't Telugu. Maybe he doesn't like snakes, or the idea of sudden expansion, say, in his fight against Frank Bruno. "I won't mess him as much as I did Buster Mathis!" he says softly, with a smile. The words suggest an uncorrupted expedition. He is aware that thick layers of rag rust will have to be scraped off work industrial energy. He is aware, too, that he must lower his rag, retreat to his no more "knocker" motherfuckers out is what I do" or "bannin' his nose up into his brain."

"Talking out my gizzards," he says in the living room of his Las Vegas mansion. "It turns me to drink of what I used to say. A fighter's power isn't his words. It's his life."

"You have more power and are bigger than before prison?"

"Power doesn't measure me," he says. "I don't want power. It's a drug. Power corrupts the soul."

"A soul? That's going to surprise so many who think you don't have one."

"Yeah. All those who expect me to be what they want. The beast."

For someone who says he discounts the idea of power, Tyson is forced to look at his own every day in Las Vegas. When he goes into town, he has only to look up to see a fiery sight like nothing else. It's high above the MGM Grand Hotel with his sulfurous eyes pressed down the Strip. When he returns to his home, a four-story palace, slavery over ornamental home and Mercedes limousines are parked like jets for takeoff. There is more security around him than in a prison station. It looks like a mob boss camp, with people standing around outside, waiting for his smallest with inside orders lower in wait for his next belch or sigh.

After ordering a big pitcher of ice water, Tyson curls back to the king cobra. He says, "I would've cut his fuckin' head off before I looked for the shade. Enforce me the language. I like the dyin' like a man. It's my kind of thing." He has a lot of things. These days, he has a thing for tigers and lions. He has a thing for words like *arson*, *ambly*, *dignity*, and *pride*. He has a thing for Islam. A thing for ancient Greece, a thing about legendary gorgons like Meyer Lansky and Peggy Segal, who began in the same Brownsville neighborhood he once worked in a pickpocket. He has a thing about Wayne Newton, who lives next door, and has many things about being a man. He even has a thing about being a thing.

"I don't want to be perceived as a fighter anymore, just a violent thing," he says. "I want to be seen as a man who is ferocious in life, will not be stopped."

Oh, say to this gang to be like talking to George Berni, waiting for the jokes, only to hear for hours about agrarian reform in Mexico? Where have you seen this talk from a

fighter before? Right, Mohammad Ali. Ask him about his craft and you'd get an hour on movie westerns or lookin'-baded renditions of world politics. So many fighters have desperately wanted to flee what they do, even a great tradesman like Joe Frazier would emphasize his side career as a dissonant singer. Tyson can be extremely articulate, though, about his work, better than anyone before. Right now, however, he's obdurate, dumbly evasive. When he doesn't fancy an inquiry, his voice breaks up like a cloud into a crumble.

"Are you bored?" he is asked.

"I'm bored some with training." He pauses. "These moments, really hate them. I don't want to go home." He frowns. "Consider it a conversation. People want to know what's on your mind. With all these millions, this comfort, they want to know if the passion is still there."

"Don't you know?" he says. "I'm not supposed to have a mind. I'm a monster." He drinks. "Look," he adds, "fighting to me is what theory was to Einstein or words were to Hemingway. Fighting is aggression. Aggression is my nature." His eyes look away. "I don't wanna talk about boxing. Do you like Hemingway? I like his writing, but I don't like him personally. Too much ego."

The cloud starts to become a way. So to pack it full of fire, again, you tell him a little story about ancient Greece. He likes the subject. He has a downy of a break on the Greek in front of him. The Greek, he is told, valued courage in a fighter. This one fighter, Durydanus, had a heart full of it. He took a terrible blow to his mouth, up, roaring his front teeth, but instead of spitting them out, he swallowed them, rather than show the other guy he was badly hurt. "Is that right?" says Tyson. "That's not in my book. That's courage. What? Like Wayne Newton?"

Wayne Newton? How did we go from the Golden Age of Greece to a Vegas singer? He lies right next to me. "Tyson says 'I wondered over and we talked. I'm not impressed by many people, but he impressed me. Ronald Reagan came to see him, was waiting for him in front of his house. The pope came here. Here's a guy who started on the road when he was fifteen had nothing, nearly starved, and became a big. He says, 'Mike, I've seen money and fame come and go, come back again and go again. Everybody falls. Just don't say down. And be very careful about people you trust. He's supposed to be bankrupt now. You'd never know it. The man is smart. You're talking to a strong, very stable man. I see big courage there. Dignity.'"

Tyson seems hungry for life lessons. He picks through examples as if he were striding through a socialist tin market. In analogy, he finds and likes the realization that he is just a dirt mole in the wind blowing across thousands of years. In reality about the old beliefs, he finds that, compared with them, he wasn't such a wretch in his more primal days. He was just a punk kid who couldn't stand being who he was and sought the drink in the alley or the walter, delly pulled, of the guy on the bus to express himself. He is essentially a romantic, eternally dissatisfied with who he is, even now, in his cocoon of interstices forever backing through the thicket to some good and right evolution he can live with.

His conversion to Islam is just one more back. "Look," he says, "I'm not going to split the Red Sea. I'm a very private

Eye of the Tiger: "Fighting to me is what theory was to Einstein or words were to Hemingway. Fighting is aggression."



Muslims. I feel at peace with it. I'd like to go to the mosque, but I don't. Muslims are human beings first, and knowing that, I know what they'll be thinking. The signals will go off in their heads. Here comes the rapist, the thief, the defiler, these holy pigs. I can't allow exposure to this kind of thinking. But I go to the prayer yard every day. And now it's Ramadan, a time for fasting for thirty days. I've been doing it for four years. No food from sunrise to sundown, then just enough for dinner, no pagging out. I love it. Look forward to it. I feel like a different man. It's a high, makes you feel a little lighter-headed."

He found Islam in prison. Some think he sought out Muslims, a kind, protective fiction in many prisons, for personal security. "How ridiculous," he says. "When I first went in, my hair started to turn white. The psychiatrist told me I was spoiled used to control. Well, screw him. It's a hell, with people being robbed, unskilled, and raped and everybody applauding. It turned my stomach. People tried to attack themselves to see because I was Mike Tyson. They soon learned that I'm a very unpleasant person to live with."

Tyson seems to like talking about the time he did in the Indiana State Center. He approached him, Tyson like a warrior, as if one of the Greek gods had assigned him a son of woe. "I miffed," he says, "every chance I got. Guards harassed me, called me names. But I still rebelled. Never stopped, until back. I did it for a reason. If the rest of the inmates saw me that way, they'd rebel. If they saw me kind, they would know, broken. Then people who didn't like me watched to see how I'd deal with that kind of pressure." (He was even put in the Halls, he says, for attacking a guard who'd shoved him, while on duty and alone, almost a complete deprivation chamber, which showed him that release is the parent of servitude if you are strong.)

"I was going to make those guards respect me no matter what," he adds.

"You could've been in there forever."

"I didn't care. I had no one to go back to. I thought I was a worthless human being. So much trouble. I could have done a lifetime there. I just didn't care."

"What about the Halls?"

"If you want me to say a broken man, forget it. I was cool, just my head and one. I like being alone. I could've done the whole truck thing. It was the best time I did."

"Did you get a bad deal?"

"I didn't pick anyone, and she knows it. I was the one raped. I just sucked over, sorry by everybody. They all got a piece of Mike. The prosecutor, Greg Garrison, was a shameless opportunist. He's famous now, all over television. The judge, Patricia Clifford, well, I was her big moment. Twenty years from now, all she'll be able to claim is that she put this famous nigger away. If I was guilty to twelve years, why didn't she give me the maximum, forty years? I found everybody when I left prison. I was better. I wanted to blow up the world. No more. Hate wastes you away now."

"What about your own lawyer, Vincent Piller, when he

said that everybody knows you're an animal?"

"I was shocked," he says. "I was devastated, absolutely devastated. It was worse than prison. The whole world heard that. Later, I just walked over to him and said, 'Never come to see me again.'"

His head suddenly came to a huge wall totally covered by TVs, like electronic wallpaper. There the images combine into one massive picture: It is a O.J. Simpson conducting his defense or offense, against public opinion. "I don't wanna hear him," Tyson shouts. The sound is immediately cut off. "That is an incredible individual right here." You prepare for a delusion of confidence here: a full-on deep sympathy. He swells then jerks his head away from the screen. The disgust is palpable. If he had popcorn, he'd halt it at the screen. Tyson cannot tolerate being witness to what he senses to be weakness or an abdication of pride.

"Cus [D'Amato, Tyson's founder and creator] used to tell me about the Great Depression," he says. "He told me about rich men jumping off buildings they owned because of pride. About rich stars, new books, who refused to get in soup lines because of pride." He winces. "Cus," he says, "Mike! They started to drink, some of them! They're proud! I want you to have that kind of pride!" He continues.

"What O.J.'s doing is honoring. The man has no dignity. The way he's trying to win public opinion. That's making him look very unstable. People like a vicious fighter in life. I'm not saying O.J.'s a bad guy. Look at this! He's laughing. He's not dealing with a situation that calls for that. I believe the more he keeps his mouth shut, the more it'll go away. But he keeps bringing it up. God's allowing this to happen. God's planning to screw him. Go on. Keep talking."

He coughs his finger, and the image of O.J. disappears, fades back into the checkered floor of television. He jumps up and says, "Let's go play with my wife after his name is Karpis. Only seven months old. The last, Cesar, isn't here. He's getting his name changed."

"What's the appeal of anger?"

"They're solitary. They don't need anyone."

"Lena?"

"They're great family men."

"Do you see those things in yourself?"

"Maybe."

"Can they ever be yours?"

"Maybe never," he says simply.

MIKE TYSON IS INFORMED BY boxing history, he got that from Cus, too. He says that he admires the old fighters in the smaller weight, like Stanley Kitchel, the surely cowboy who was shot in the back over a woman problem during breakfast. Soberly, though, he measures himself against the heavyweights of the past, he wants the same fantasy of Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, and Muhammad Ali, the king of kings. As his old trainer Kevin Rooney says, "Cus, from the start, had Mike in with history. He was to be the greatest champion. The plan was to fight him twice a year, smash

Marciano's perfect record, and go 55-0."

Louis was the template for the great heavyweight for those who saw him: a face of cathedral stone, then punches struck like unopened rain from a hell town, then stillness. He was a measure to his people and among many whites, even white blacks were taught from dusty tales. He spoke for the dispossessed who listened to him on small radios in dark southern shacks, for the dignity of his mind and the racial harmony that must one day come. Marciano—mute, a gluttonous eater of punches until he could detonate his own longevity. By his every word, he was the exemplar of the fighter, the man whose with the plot of greatness.

the new appearance.

Ask about the moments of the old champion. Tyson, because verbal for the first time and visual like never before, "He's beautiful, he's pretty," he used to say, and keep their black hair mass in their chest. The television camera began greedily on the loss of Ali's style and attitude. Though Ali was the memorable real thing, the most gifted by race in ring history and a model of a generation's tactical intellect, he was also the father of the contemporary ring, where the show, the more-over-the-top event, is the intense focus, where mediocrity is made to look like quality by underlining media for an audience with a consciousness at such deep. The assumption part of Ali's legacy is that he generated a whole line of hating racism and created a sport that has now become dangerously close to pro wrestling.

There is a tendency to keep a massive kick between Ali and Tyson because of their style and religion. Ali in the first half of his career was despised, then re-evaluated, the reverse is true of Tyson. And both men played with the fire of sex. The difference was the media reaction, when they looked at all. With Ali, it was considered cute, with Tyson, it became terror. The most striking part of Ali as a fighter was his sense of ring geometry. His whole game was built on time and space, he was a light show of compression, and in his early days that was not what his men were supposed to be about.

With the coming of Tyson, the ring returned to the dark beach. When you looked at him, you didn't see men, you saw the way the ring used to be decades earlier.

the single light over the railing table, the backed up toilet, and the cold shower. Tyson put your ass next black night face where rocks and bones were being shaped into kicking position, and thumped the reptilian brain in all of us. He brought back the primal rush—men seeing the rulelessness of other men.

As a presence, Tyson can be more closely linked to two other strange heavyweight. Sonny Liston and Floyd Patterson, another Cus D'Amato production. He has the same grave aura, the same atmosphere at Patterson, except that Tyson has a winning, disarming charisma. To speak with Patterson was to be led through a psychic wood of man, over topics like fear and courage. Often, you felt as if you were entering a Chickadee nest in a Chickadee summer dacha, with the smell of burnt tea and smoke looking for clarity in a salacious of greyish. Liston presented an image of imminent danger and defiance. He went through life like a bug in a garden giant. He and Tyson share the same early self-purgatory, but they divide in the matter of conscience. Liston had none, Tyson seems to have found one.

What lack Tyson forward is more than other great heavyweights. It's the old idea of the rule, as pointed out by Cus D'Amato. "The rule was not a rule, it was an 'offer' like that of a president in death, when JFK called Patterson to the White House, he wasn't looking for a photo op, he was negotiating with the consciousness of the heavyweight title."

"To be a champion then," says Tyson, "means something. That kind of respect, it's not out there now." Then he bows a conspiracy. "I just have myself to say, 'I did the very Cus. As long as I walk the crown, he will rule with me.' Tyson, it's clear, has a ghost for a manager."

You can see a lot of D'Amato in Tyson, the old man's paranoia and brutality can look into Tyson's head in a second. He was a spooky psychic and spoke once of how he would "put the lock" on people on a list, and they would feel it and turn toward him. "Cus is in my head," Tyson says. "He knows. Others think they know, they don't."

OTHERS WOULD LIKE TO KNOW what left in Tyson's head for the ring. What does he have left, if anything? Kevin Rooney doesn't think there's much, though he



Men of peace: "When I left prison, I was bitter. No more. Hate wastes you away."

qualifies his own feelings of betrayal. "When he came up and was knocked, everybody cries," says Rooney. "He had so percent of the capability was wanted. In '91 and part of '92, he was on the road to greatness." What does he have left? "He's an ordinary fighter. He's rusty. Everything is wrong with him. Doesn't jab at all now, he's not slipping punches. He still has hand speed and power but nothing in the head."

Teddy Atlas, a trainer who worked under Cus with Tyson, says, "He's not the same fighter he was before. In his first years, there was a moment again. [Peter] McNerley. He could have dropped him. Instead, he grabbed him. Tyson likes to call himself a blood man. I didn't see any blood men. A blood man debilitates. Gosh, brag for guys—that's a crutch. But I don't know if there's enough guys to exploit it. Atlas has no love left for Tyson."

adding, "He's never had any character or discipline, and he's manipulative." Has he softened? Atlas says, "Tougher. He's a very incomplete man brought up by Cus, who was another emotionally incomplete man."

For a down-the-middle view of Tyson, it's best to go to Eddie Futch, the finest trainer the ring has produced, with numerous champions, six of them famous: Ray Patch, who rose from Riddick Bowen. "I want him all back for Bowen. I hope he has a back. But you just don't know about his reflexes. When they leave, it's subtle. A fighter knows what to do but can't do it. Tyson's the kind of fighter who won't have much longevity. He expends so much energy exploding that not much is left after six rounds. It doesn't make for a long career, there's too much waste of energy for a little man. Tyson can't relax in the ring. He's always tight."

What kind of fighter can beat him? "Tall men—they make him go more than six rounds. A puncher who can back him up. He's never been backed up. We'll see now."

Futch, now in his eighties, is asked, "Do you put Tyson in your top five all-time?"

"No," he says. "Louis had too much in either hand for Mike—short, deadly combinations that shake you to your shoes. With Ali, Mike wouldn't hit him with a hard punch. Jersey Joe Walcott wouldn't have been too smart for him. Leon was too big and powerful and had a jarring jab. Rocky would be his, that's for sure, but Mike would use violence in spirit."

Which brings us to the hole in Tyson's young legend. Tyson says he hates fame, "all those people screaming and screaming at you," but he craves glory. Real glory comes from serious and gallant opposition, when a champion is taken to hell and back by an opponent of certain merit who allows the champion to express his greatness. Louis had Max Baer and Wilton; Muhammad had Wilton; and Bernard Hopkins. Ali had the full wagon of Joe Frazier two times (don't count the middle one), the most dramatic

in fights in history, and a young, destructive George Foreman, who had even Ali's fans fearing for his well-being. Where is the glorious, defining series, Mike, the kinds of fights that make your true worth and merit, that leave people gasping with each shot, their hands clenched their palms wet? Has it hurt his psyche not to have that hammer a foe?

"Can we talk about literature?" he asks curiously. "Sure."

"You like Tolstoy? He had me all screwed up in jail, made me want to give everything away. Tolstoy was a square. Dickens wasn't. He knew villains and celebrities. [His father] did time in jail, and I believe, as he wrote, 'I shall not forget. I will not forget. I cannot forget.'" He pauses.

"You like Fitzgerald?"

"Very much. The Great Gatsby. Especially the part about Tom and Daisy. How 'they were careless people. They smashed up things and then stirred back into their money or their vast consciousness and let other people clean up the mess they had made.'"

Tyson eyes you closely, then says, "I cleaned up my own mess. And the only wreckage I left behind was me."

"What do you think about women?" He has been reported ready to marry Monica Turner, a pediatrician who is expecting his baby.

"I love women," he says. "I'd be unsure not to. I just won't love as deeply again. It's dangerous for me. I'm attracted to independent women, not the ones who try to live over you."

"Have you ever been a fool?" "I've been a fool, I'd like a fool, and acted like a fool. I've been through a lot of shit. I've been hospitalized in my first marriage. I've been harassed by girls who said I grabbed their breasts. I've been humiliated, about being in prison. I've lost my belief in humanity, at times my humanity as well."

Tyson jumps off the sofa and bounds up the stairs. He is weary of talking, or maybe he's suspicious of the excitement going on, the effort to get at what the master biographer Leon Edel called "the figure under the capot." The figure here is safe, Tyson debasement over a sport. As he said earlier: "I have a serious thing going on between me and my head, it's just me and my head." How this would deal with him is anyone's guess. He could end up as a sure-book collection, a prophet with a long beard in the back of a language or talking on the grass with his children while the snails walk his violence long as day and his inherent humanity in full restoration. Or... well, let's say there's hope in a dream he's always had, a dream in which he steps into the ring to fight Mike Tyson. He used to lose the house, giving the signal that the real Tyson was "not meant to be beaten."

How does the dream end now? "I beat him every time," he says. ■

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THERE'S MORE TO EXPLORE IN BLACK.

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Sorcery, Sunsets, Corpses, and Whores

What was our man doing twelve hundred miles up the Congo River, in the dark heart of the most corrupt country on earth? And what happened to him? BY JORN TAYLOR

I WITNESSED THE BEATING of the cripples on my first day in Kinshasa. It was late morning in October, at the advent of the rainy season. The dust hung in the humid air. The *bandoyens* took this time the old boulevard was powdered with tiny blue and orange flowers. After an early surge of noise and tumult, Zaire's capital—colonial boulevards with running no roads and riotously overgrown gardens, soon washed office buildings, a center-block shantytown sprawling endlessly through black dirt and under-corn grocery—had fallen into a hush.

People sought the shade, and I came across the cripples, in a group of about twenty, lounging near to their bicycles. Kinshasa is full of cripples, which accounts in part for its medieval atmosphere, and many of them get about on overcast homemade bicycles, a chain running up the front wheel to a sprocket on the handlebars enables them to pedal by hand.

As I approached the cripples, something down the street suddenly caused them to panic. They scrambled atop their bicycles, folding their withered legs beneath them on the seat, and pedaled past me, chattering frenziedly in *Lingala*, the dominant tribal language of Zaire. Further along the boulevard, I found smashed bicycles lying in heaps, and beyond that wreckage, a dozen soldiers in olive fatigues were destroying more bicycles and beating cripples, shoving them, as they stood in process, into two rusty vans.

It was a disturbing, chilling incident, but I thought I understood it. I was in Africa, in Zaire—the heart of darkness—and what I was witnessing, I told myself at the time, was a scene of Congolese horror.

Of course, I didn't understand it at all. The true explanation came that evening, and it was so unlike any I could have imagined that it not only demonstrated how poorly I understood the country I was in—it also made me wonder if, here in Zaire, I could trust my senses at all.

A European experience I had met through mutual acquaintances had invited me to dinner at Domènica's, a bistro near the affluent Gombe dis-

over, when the generals, old executives and dickheads like Dumbah's war-movie and low-budgeted and had an aggressively rough atmosphere. Some of the more educated students, however, helped organize with traditional nationalist, oversteered South African security consultants, and eventually helped protesters to frequent the place. The protesters who were extremely young had gathered like a flock of excited birds along a bar in the front. They had white necks and olive-colored skin. They were fashion and performance artists. They wore black and white. Black dresses and gold jewelry, and as we made our way to the dining room, they poured, rapped, and measured and passing their tips, and stretched out into the night. They mouthed "the ex- and the" "the bubble zone".

The caput was an enjoyable character, candid and cynical. The Adnan was had permanently blistered his fat

“The c
house

"We did a table and ordered. I described the beating of the cripples. The expert smiled. 'Well, you know, the cripples are very strong from the waist up—all they do is push,' he said. They have these shakedown gangs. They go into shops and threaten to destroy everything, unless they are paid off. These businessmen have soldiers to protect them from the cripples."

Outraged and alarmed, the expert cut in on his bloody shield and dipped the meat in mayonnaise. "A little white blob," he said, "the cripples tend to attack a bourgeois man who is under the protection of the soldiers. The soldiers arrived and the expert—the expert leaned over and made a soothing motion with his arm—"throw the cripples over the wall." The cripples are not very heavy, since their lower bodies are atrophied. The leader of the cripples, who plays the guitar, wrote a song about the taming of the cripples. He can be found near a restaurant that businessmen frequent. Now every time the businessmen enter there, he has the cripple come in and play the song. It makes both of them happy.

Some names have been changed

We burst out in laughter—the peculiarly explosive laughter of detached. So much, I thought, for Canadian humor.

DISORDER RECKONS The late novelist John Gardner once said there are only two kinds of stories. A man goes on a journey, or a stranger comes to town. The latter is the account of an invasion. It begins when the wanderer's shadow first defines the doorway. But where does an adventure begin? With the decision to make the trip? The dilemma? Or does it begin with the initial moment of dislocation, that first awful titer of the strangeness of the strange land, the wanderer's view through the doorway into an unfamiliar room?

ripples
these
down

The country has always fascinated me. It is huge—as big as the United States east of the Mississippi—and rich in natural resources but arguably the single most corrupt place on the earth. Mobutu Sese Sese who seized power after a coup, consumed by the

TA has been surprisingly honest in testimony for thirty years. Government, as it is understood in most countries, has obligated it to no longer provide free food and seed of Zaire to the other Twiist since 1992. Zaire's soldiers have gone on rampages. The country seems to suffer from some peculiar case AIDS has never originated in an eastern area. Since last year, the Rhoda virus killed 44 people around the town of Kilowa. When I had wonderful for almost two years, a place dipping slightly south from the town north of my backpack into a world of bandits, deception, and nihilism—usually life!

Last summer, Joshua Hammer, a *New Yorker* correspondent and an old friend, called from his base in Nairobi and said he was planning a trip on the

Zam River, famously known as the Congo, into the country's interior. He

would retrace the journey Conrad took in 1890 that became the basis for *Heart of Darkness*. "It's the ultimate African adventure," Josh told me.

In that last year, I had turned forty and, after twelve years of marriage separated from my wife, Africa's weakness and disorder beckoned.

MONKEY MEAT Our plan was to spend some time in Kinshasa, then take a boat twelve hundred miles up the great mythic handway to Kunguru, the scoring both of Conrad's frater Station and V.S. Naipaul's masterpiece on postcolonial Africa. A few in the River from Kunguru, we would fly east to the town of Goma, the site of a huge refugee camp on the Rwandan border, and then back to Nairobi.

The boat, which provides the only access to the interior, carrying up to two thousand passengers in cramped quarters on a series of barge, supposedly made the journey once a month. It had only recently resumed scheduled trips after a three-year period during which, for murky political reasons, it had not run at all. It might not leave on schedule, or it might never leave. Also, no commercial airlines flew from Gorra to Nairobi. We would have to hitch a ride with a relief boat.

We arrived in Kamihara late one afternoon in early October. What is most immediately striking about the city is its small, if not *unmistakably*, *monotonous*, as soon as I stepped off the plane at Niigata Airport—a ripe, sweet, creamy-moldlike odor, a blend of woodsmoke, garbage, jungle decay, diesel fumes, not only bananas, charcoal and ash, onion, dung, and tallow. It is as strong and as unexpectedly aromatic as a good pipe tobacco, the smell of a place where people have no reason to smell.

What also struck me right away was the garbage and the fire. No one collects the garbage in Kinshasa, and it is scattered everywhere, through the streets along the rutted lanes, in every ditch and pool of standing water. Piles of matted garbage are all over, and those fires, together with ones in cooking hearths in front of the tiny one-room houses, give the air a smoky gray cast even when the sun is out. Kinshasa is a city slowly, continuously burning.

After checking into the Inter-Continental, Bobb and I drove down to the



A knotted vine was attached to the host like a parasite, making the Colossal Elvira an incredible floating structure.

docks. Passengers waiting for the boat to leave had camped out on the pier. Children sat on the ground, and

chickens pecked at the loose grain spilling from the seal sacks piled everywhere. A man walked past with the hunch of an antelope—bloody thigh stump, upturned leg, and delicate black hoof—stung over his shoulder.

Another man, standing against a wall, had what I noticed was a sack of monkey coconuts. Seeing me studying him, he approached and held the monkeys out. They had been beaten into his cage pulled apart; broken bones protruded through their bony, dead skin.

"You want?" he asked in French.
I shook my head.

"You don't eat monkey?" the man asked in amazement. "Why?" My lack of interest seemed him. He showed the camera at me. "What? What?"

My answer—that monkey meat is *not* a basic squamarch because, for one thing, guano monkeys are believed to be the original source of the AIDS virus and, for another, eating a primate

seemed vaguely cannibalistic—was not one I wanted to share. The man split to dinner and stalked off.

We entered a dusty terminal. A clerk said he knew nothing of the merchant's departure and directed us to a nearby office building. We climbed four flights of stairs and walked down a dark corridor, peering into dim offices filled with idle people until we found a small man in a white shirt who said the boss needed repairs and, anyway there was at the moment no money for fuel, so it wouldn't be leaving for another week. At least

THE ENTREPRENEUR The next night, Anzolea, a driver Josh and I had hired, picked us up for a night in Leona at Kushtana's shantytown in Kibera. Josh, one of Anzolea's find was denied, it lacked a front bumper, and one headlight dangled like an eyeball, gouged from its socket. Because Kibera has virtually no functioning streetlights, the city is, except for the flickering, trash fires, scorchingly dark at night. The beam was dim on the find's working headlight, the roads were crowded, and as we hurried along,

pedestrians magnetized in front of us
out of the diffuse crowd

When a wheezing-hoarsed police man held up his hand, Amante stood straight past him. "Never stop for America; they only waste money," he and Amante spoke in a slurred rasble from so deep within his chest that it was difficult to understand him even a year French was perfect, and now wasn't he. He added something under-
standable.

"We" I asked.
 "No one obeys the law here."
 We stopped at a house to pick up Gascon, a friend of Anacleto's and a producer at *Vozes de Zaire* radio. Gascon, who was about thirty had a handsome and intelligent face. His hair was shaved. He wore a bottle-green double-breasted suit with the Erno Galtby label still attached to the left sleeve. Like many Zaireans, he carried a cellular phone (his regular phone almost never worked), and as Anacleto maneuvered the Ford through a cat's paw worked it.

"Serge, it's me, Gerson. Are we on for Drama?" Gerson launched into a serious business discussion. "Ben Col-

me back." Gascon explained that he was paid only five dollars a month at the House of Zaire. When the job really offered was the opportunity to make money through connections. He earned a living as a freelance music producer. He and Serge, an agent, were seeing up a recording session for the next day in Brazzaville, across the river in the Congo Republic, it wasn't a great living, Gascon said—he ate only one meal a day, and his wife sold peanuts and beer out of their house for a little extra cash—but he was doing better than most.

"We are all—what's the word? Americans like so much—impoverished," he said. For example, he went on, students at the university must pay their professors. But if the students pay, the professor must give him a good grade. Professors pay journalists to have stories written about them, and journalists pay their editors to run the stories. Convicts do not serve prison sentences; they are incarcerated until their families pay off the warden and guards.

"But's suppose trying to change things?" I asked. "Change?" Gascon seemed genuinely puzzled.

"There seems to be such a political vacuum," I persisted. The government raised almost no revenues and provided almost no services. Everyone was on his own. The biggest thieves were the police.

"How could a change?" Gascon asked. The subject didn't interest him very much. "No one can do anything. What is a man to do?"

This incident struck me as extraordinary. For all Zaire's problems, the country was

disappointed. The people who lived there did not see its chaos in political terms; they were unable to imagine a political solution.

Gascon's phone buzzed. He returned to business, which, unlike politics, offered some small hope. "Serge? So Brazza is confirmed?"

CELESTE Gascon took us to an upstairs beer hall where the Anzani beer company was having a party to launch the sale of Anzani in Zaire. The hall was bright and crowded. Wines and short Anzani drinks served for beer. We took seats in the balcony and a friend of Gascon's, a woman named Celeste, with dark eyes and soft hair, joined us.

On the stage, a Zairian band played one of the driving, irresistible songs that have made the country's music the most popular in Africa. At the front, four female dancers in leotards and leggings moved gracefully, swaying their arms and pegging their buttocks at the crowd in a rhythmic rock version of African tribal dance. Two dozen European distributors sat at tables in front of the stage. One of them rose and gave a speech about the rich flavor and modest price of Anzani. Then, with the band playing again, two dancers in purple sequined tribal costumes began to dance.

People in various states of inebriation sat up to the dwarfs and shouted them with handfuls of the worthless Zairian currency. At one point, the European man seemed to decide that this ritual was obligatory for them. He rose in protest, mumbled the dwarfs, and, seemingly aware of how ludicrous they looked, sat motionless.

into the distinctive performance.

Throughout the dance, Celeste sat politely in her chair, sipping a beer. Now and again, Josh and I tried to engage her in conversation, but it was hard work. Outside afterward, while the departing guests ranged into the smoky night, she said goodbye and disappeared. As we were going into the Ford, the four female dancers walked by.

"Tomorrow" we called. "Tomorrow" they replied. I could see by the yellow light from the beer hall that they were flushed from their own. The seams of their leotards were damp with sweat. One pushed her hair up off her neck.

I leaned my head out the window—I had had my share of Anzani—and shouted, "Les femmes danseuses de Zaire ont le plus belle danse du monde!"

The perplexed dancers giggled and waved. I wasn't even sure whether I had said what I had intended to say. "Mes femmes en fin de monde!" I told Gascon.

"You're not," he said. "You're *capitaine*."

We all laughed heartily. I was enjoying myself as much as I had on any occasion in years. The moon was full, giving the grass like a silver shimmer. As Anzani started the Ford, Gascon said, "Neither of you wanted to take Celeste back to the hotel!"

THE MINISTRY It was just as well the boat was delayed, for Gascon and Anzani refused us that to visit the interior of Zaire, we needed permits from the Ministry of Information. The ministry was housed in a glass office tower. Made of pale green stone, with porches for windows, it had clearly been conceived

as a tribute to the glorious past of African civilization but was now in a state of stunning dilapidation. The driveway was blocked by the battered rim of a bicycle wheel, which a soldier, after checking our papers, solemnly removed.

A reliable-looking clerk on the left-hand floor told us we would have no problem securing the papers we needed, but when we returned the next day, he had disappeared. We came back on the third day and, after waiting for three hours, were shown into the office of the vice-minister. He had eggplant-colored skin and a deeper color. His navy blue and gray-flecked slacks were finely pressed.

Josh asked why we needed permits. "This was not requested in the past," he said.

"Yes," the vice-minister replied. His French was perfect. "In the past, there was a period of disorder, and people could travel anywhere without permits. But now we are restoring order. Permits are necessary."

The price, he said, was tiny.

"We are here to visit positively about your country," Josh said. "Not about politics or economics but about the river, the people, the culture, the forests."

The vice-minister lit a Dunhill with a thin gold lighter. Five hundred is a thousand crows. Since you are writers, the fee is no money."

There was something preposterous about exalting about laughing with the man (the vice-minister himself) over a minor bribe. I adopted a more expression. "We simply don't have that kind of money," I said.

"You misunderstood me. I mean steps for the two of you."

Josh and I looked at each other and nodded. In an afternoon, we watched a functionary fill out forms using carbon paper in ancient and final as papers. The vice-minister opened his door.

"There is a problem," he told us. "I thought you were with the same organization. But you are with two organizations."

He gazed out the window, actually smiling. His gesture as he turned the problem over in his hand. "This must be me," he said.

"Zey don't lock us in," the Swiss prisoner said. "We lock ourself in to keep our sings safe."

After he lit a Dunhill and inhaled contentedly, a soldier pronounced: "Another hand!" he said decisively, and strode into his office.

THE PRISONER This afternoon, we learned that due to the scarcity of spare parts, the boat would not leave for another week. I began to feel slightly confined in Kinshasa.

What, I wondered, were the real prisons like in a country where nothing works? I'd also heard that a European was being held in a local jail until his ransom arrived, and I wanted to meet him. "That's Otto," Claude Remy, who worked for the Red Cross, told me when I contacted her. The following day she took me out to Matadi Prison.

Part of the prison's wall had collapsed, the explained on the way but that was no security matter. The prison was a place where the prisoners who can't afford to buy their freedom rarely try to escape. If they do, the soldiers simply arrest a member of the prisoner's family. And the people who live nearby must their own bond of justice on escapees. Locals who had caught two men who had run away earlier in the year had dragged them behind cars and poured diesel fuel into their ears.

The prison, located in a field near a market, had a pocket, nearly solid wall and a metal gate of the type used to keep cows in a pasture. After a brief period of security, the prisoners entered-looking inmates, squatted on floor mats. Claude led us down a path lined with banana and into a high-ceilinged room. Otto emerged from a small door. He was stout and bald, had a broad nose going white, and wore flip-flops and a dusty T-shirt.

"Please to sit," he said, indicating a narrow table. Although he had lived in Zaire for nineteen years—he owned a vegetable firm at the interior—he was from Switzerland and retained a thick German accent. I asked him why he was imprisoned.

"I had some problems with a general. General is commander of Belgian Equator, my province. I had discussed that with his wife and wife of general. Diamonds not good quality. She loose a lot of money. General has me arrested. I am here two months now."

"It is a game in my country, no justice. No law posting. At first, my arrested fifty million mouons. Zaire—life assured. American dollars—to sit me five. I bargain down to ten million mouons. Zaire—one thousand dollars. I bargain more. Now I had settle everything at four million mouons. Zaire—four hundred dollars. A friend will get it by boat from at firm. But it is one hundred miles away. Till then I am here."

Otto showed me his cell. It was dark and hot, with a single glass-brick window, a bed, and a table piled with French translations of Jean Sibelius. Sibelius novels. I asked Otto if he was locked in at night.

"Zey don't lock us in. We lock ourself in," he pointed to a stick and wire latch he had fashioned on the inside of his door—"to keep our sings from being stolen."

STAMPEDE As time wore on in Kinshasa, I began to ask myself whether this city had been a mistake. The roads were no longer well worn, and, accustomed to obligingly grammatical American travel, I was finding it difficult to reconcile myself to such huge uncertainties. "Time has no meaning here," the expert had told me that night at Domono's. It had seemed a beguiling, casual statement at the time, but now I began to wonder if it could endure.

As a diversion, Gascon wanted us to attend a speech of Zairian Vice Prime outside center. This one was to be held in Minksa. "Minksa is the most crowded, the most magnificent town on the city," Gascon said. As Anzani drove the Ford through it, people with no jobs and no money but here. A house rents for about two dollars a month."

Traffic slowed at the cost of a hill. A crowd of maybe thirty thousand people had gathered in an open field, spilling out across the road. Anzani pulled over. We looked the car and followed her into the crowd. He moved swiftly wriggling between people, reaching out the push of his nose. In less than a minute, the back of his blue shirt was soaked with sweat. That made me realize how hot it was—so hot that he had to be naked.

The crowd was cheering and swaying, creating tidal surges of humanity that pushed as back and forth. By now, I had been in Kinshasa more than a week. Its distinctive smell had



31 DAYS, 2,000 MILES From civilization to chaos and back.

gotten into my hair, my clothes, my mouth, my nose. Here in Muzira, where the mist was so thick that it seemed to have achieved filamentation, the smell was almost overpowering. I started to feel asphyxiated.

Up ahead, *Astoude*, with Josh behind him, continued to shove through the crowd. At that moment, a woman in front of me fainted. Her collapse drove me backward. I felt trapped. The faces of the people around me glowed, their expressions a mix of concern and ecstasy. They too, felt trapped. And when I cupped my hands, I captured a claustrophobia so intense that it amounted to a type of *savagery*. Suddenly, I had to get out.

Gaston and I turned and thrashed our way back. We stepped near a brown awning, where the crowd was

A group of men passed around a fat joint. "Ugandan spliff," one croaked. "Très bien."

thinner. But just then, a stampede began. Gators charged my back, and we sought protection behind the awning. The crowd thrashed past on either side. That would. Women tried out in pairs. Soldiers, their machine rifles pointed skyward, drove through in a jostle, pulling behind them a man in handcuffs. The stampeding crowd had poured out onto the highway, completely blocking traffic. The soldiers began firing their weapons in the air and the crowd came stampeding back.

I had been in crowds before—political rallies, demonstrations, rock concerts, sports stadiums, in an agony and exuberant cacophony—but the one in Muzira was unlike any I had experienced. Men and women had turned and were running toward us their eyes wide, when the stampede fleeing on itself, since the only way for those in front of the mob to avoid being trampled was to outrun it, to be some part of it. No one was capable of individual movement, of turning the mob's power and thrust.

"This I thought in my mind, is the heart of darkness, not some remote jungle outpost, but this, the deadly to me, of the urban, made I remained dubious until the concert was over. Josh returned in high spirits. Soldiers had appeared and cut a way through the crowd for him up to the stage. I started

to tell him about the stampede, but then I stopped. It occurred to me that I might have exaggerated to myself, that perhaps the hysteria had been real, not the crowd's but instead of illuminating Africa, the stampede had merely revealed how difficult it was to see the place clearly and I said nothing.

CHANTAL Early the next week we learned that the boat would be leaving in two days. The next night, I ran into a British satellite technician in the bar of the Inter-Continental. His name was Andrew. He had a wiry, handsome nose, large ears, and the headline manner of the freelance adventurer. We decided to have dinner at Donnan's. Over cocktails and Scotch, he discussed his family (a wife and two daughters in London), his work (he had been in Mogadishu and Kampala), and his abiding passion for acid, cocaine, dope, whiskey and whores.

He was an unapologetically revolting but a fastidious repellent. After dinner we moved to the bar to drink more Scotch. The prostitutes immediately enveloped as Andrew became surrounded by Francine, a young woman whose black satin dress was held together by a gold safety pin at her breasts. Francine said she was a musician and worked in a photo shop when she was called in Andrew's lap. "I just love her man, I put her on," Andrew told me. "Look at her. She's such a lovely piece." He muzzled her on the cheek. "She makes me feel good about myself, man."

I couldn't believe he had made such a naked, childlike admission.

"You just read an article," Andrew went on. "It said it was more dangerous to have unprotected sex with a nice woman you meet at a Los Angeles cocktail party than to use a condom with an African whore."

What?

"And if you decide up on the cordons, you should be better off."

The barman was a pretty, voluptuous woman with a heart-shaped face and hair that she had looped over her temples. Her name was Chantal. She

refilled our Scotch glasses so many times that at the end of the evening, when Andrew was locked in an extended game with Francine, I mistook to accompany me back to the hotel.

What was I doing? I immediately thought I had never taken up with a prostitute in my life and the idea that I would resort to one at this stage of the game, and on a continent where prostitution was assumed to be infected with AIDS, was unfathomable. But at the same time, I felt helpless to prevent it. I was it, I seemed, surrendering to African nihilism.

"She's got a real spark that one," Andrew said. "Go for it, man. Just don't let it up on the condoms."

"I don't have any."

"I'll lend you some."

Chantal, who had been off conferring with the manager, came back to say she couldn't leave until the bar closed. Grateful for a way to damage, I told her we couldn't wait but then she asked for my room number, saying she would be there to half an hour, and I could drink of me excuse not to give it to her.

The hotel lobby was dark and quiet when I arrived. While the night clerk fumbled for my key, I wondered whether he would allow an unaccompanied barman to talk himself upstairs.

When I left myself into my room, I saw that my belongings had vanished. A note on the bed said that since the number was broken I had been given a new room. I left a sudden elation. Now since Chantal no longer even had my true room number a sexual assault impossible that she would be allowed into my hotel. I felt a little better, and, since I have always believed cynicismally that we deserve the luck we get, uneasy I had done nothing to earn this revenge. I slept badly, gripped with a sense of impending disaster, but Chantal never did show up.

THE COLONEL KRAM I was in a bad frame of mind that day the boat was due to leave. The stampede in Muzira and the episode with Chantal had made me question my ability to handle myself. I realized I had no idea what I was getting into. The report had said the trip would take three days. The boat could be a snarl or break down. And once it left, there was no turning back. If we got stuck or hurt, if we came down with malaria or hepatitis or dengue fever or Ebola, if we were



"It was so very," the parmer said. "His father put a curse on him. He should never have come on this trip."

arrested or robbed or kidnapped, we were pretty much on our own.

The previous afternoon Mark Peters, a photographer, and Graham Walsh, a freelance cameraman, had flown in from Johannesburg, where they both lived, to see new made a party of four. *Astoude* drove us to the dock. We fought our way through the jostling crowd, and there, tied up against a sagging wooden pier, was our boat, the *Colonel Kram*. The night did not seem my spirit. It was quiet and ugly, with three decks, a bridge, and a black smokestack. Although it had been painted white, every seam ran red with rust.

When I got to the edge of the pier, I saw that a large passenger barge, painted pea green and rusted like the *Colonel Kram*, was lashed to the boat's square prow. Another barge, smaller and even rustier, was attached to its port side. Four more barges were tied to the green barge. All seven vessels crowded with people. They were on every deck, on every roof. They were spreading out, tying upstair, among chairs and

luggage. Smoke roiled up from portable grills. An immense bubble of voices rose over the rumble of the sailing engines. It was not a boat we were taking up the river, it was some sort of incredible waterborne assemblage, a floating skyscraper, a musical village.

We clambered aboard. The surfaces were dark wood and grease. Our steward, whose name was Mendebe, took us up to the deluxe cabins we had reserved. Josh and I were sharing one room, Mark and Graham the other. The cabins had iron doors pulled from the outside and steel shutters welded over the windows. The rooms had been closed up for months, and when Mendebe opened the doors, the air inside was so sour and droopy-greasy it was unbearable. Inside, over narrow beds, with flannel-faced, rotten mattresses and covers worn tattered by years of washing, took up most of the space. Mendebe, gloomy and crosshatched scarred beneath along the shoulders. The bathroom sink protruded a thin trickle of brown water.

pumped directly from the river. I experienced a stab of doubt and thought, it's not too late to pull out.

Mendebe produced a frayed white cabicloth and ceremoniously spread this remnant of colonial grandeur across the rocky and table. As he was doing this, three screaming blasts sounded on the boat horns. From the barges and the docks came a vigorous cheer. On the roof of the green barge, a boy in a bright yellow T-shirt raised his arms in exultation, and the *Colonel Kram* cast out into the river.

SPLIFF Josh and I decided to explore the barges. The decks were so crowded that you could not simply walk them, they had to be negotiated. Buckets, enamel basins, coils of fabric, stacks of bread, silver crocks, and banks of laughing children all clogged the passage ways. The tiny cabins on the barges overflowed with belongings, so variously all of the passengers sat outside on the stony benches and the grotesque netting, talking exuberantly in Lingala,

who had taken our tribe, stood in the middle of the megacrowd, chesting it. He looked up, caught my eye, and stared coldly. Better, when he'd asked us to keep the tribe's secret, I had decided rather patronizingly that he had a boyish quality. Now he radiated coarse mind and brutality.

The thieves were drenched in sweat and flecked with blood. A plainclothes policeman in a CHICAGO SKULLS T-shirt, pallid Duke Sucka forward, Awe asked him where he had hidden when he had stolen Duke Sucka's money. All that the real thieves were some wild men. "Please, please, please!" he begged. "No mercy," Awe told him.

The man in the CHICAGO SKULLS T-shirt stood on the boy's legs and began beating the gray, cooked scales of his feet with a thick hose.

"Mama! Mama! Mama! Mama!" Duke Sucka screamed.

"No mercy!" Awe said again. "No mercy!"

BLAUBORTHOUSE After a week, we reached Mbundaka, a town once known as Equatorial. Beyond it, the river sways south down through the bush into forest, and that, I'd been told, is where the jungle really begins. Once we left Mbundaka, the river narrowed and we often followed a channel near the bank. Not that the bank could be seen. Trees grew out into the water, and blankets of water hyacinths—their flat, obviously green leaves had at first struck me as beautiful but eventually began to seem oppressive—choke the bases of their stalks. A lot of duck water created a mist that appeared to be emanating from the jungle.

At the same time, game became more exotic. One morning, I found a dead monkey on the dock. It had white whiskers and indistinct green black fur. A man picked it up by the tail and tried to tell it to me. He probed as white testicles, then squeezed its penis so a small stick protruded. "A delicacy," he chuckled. "You'll like it."

That night, I was awakened by an muted arguing. River people mangle their out of the darkness into the white glow of the searchlight, had boarded, and the merchants were furiously bad-tempered against one another for their game. Within a couple of days, the docks were crawling with huge river carp, ornate wild pigs, boat, well-to-do turtles, two-foot-long crocodiles, dead bats, and trussed

babies crisscrossed with white thread between their teeth and their long jaws and shut with veins.

The boat soon turned into a sort of gloriously sleazy barhouse. Wild pigs were routinely butchered in front of our cabins. Smoked fish, smoked pigs' legs, and smoked monkeys were piled in stacks on the decks, which were thick with meats and viscera, blood, mud, palm leaves, and glistening fish scales. An odor of meat and death and rot overtook the boat.

At noon one day, a hunter dragged a trussed live antelope onto the deck. Its head killed back in fanged danger. The man pulled out a knife, grasped the antelope by its black antlers, and slashed it across the throat. One compartment merchant had to relocate her vessel to avoid the spreading pool of blood. The animal's skin peeled, but its entrails poured and it dripped the River truly, the capitalist's forehead red. Awe, man named Bona—came down, gaddled it with his net, and ordered an underling to take it up to his private cockpit-house cabin. He had brought it for ign. I learned later, and would tell it in Kamukha for 1996.

That afternoon, I went up to the roof and found a man cooking a monkey in the antelope's fat. He had cleaned the rump on the funnel and was holding the monkey by the tail down inside it. After three minutes, he climbed down and scraped at the monkey's hair with a fishing knife. He repeated the process—drinking the rump, dipping the monkey into the belching black exhaust, and singing the fat—until the animal was completely hairless, so white skin browned from the smoke.

STOWAWAYS As we penetrated further into the jungle, the river people—some now dressed in khaki, with monkey-bag hats and neckties of inappropiate length—bored the boat with an increasing rudeness and aggression.

The sides of all the barges were now swarmed with passengers, one day, I counted 20. The police became more aggressive as well. Boatings, with apprehended thieves or brawlers, regularly to the railing, occurred regularly. One

"Gorilla is the best meat there is," the river pilot said. "It tastes just like human flesh."

away landed to wait for much concern. The men were dressed in rousing fragments of clothing. Their feet were bleached and leprous from years of standing in the puddles inside their dugouts. The women had their hair in tight cornrows and wore African wrap skirts. One produced a basket and offered it to a toddler who seemed too old to be nursing.

"They don't look worried," I said. "They're not. The police will make those who have money pay. They will take the rest to Kamukha, and that is where they go to anyway."

The police visited their frustration with this sense of affairs later that afternoon. I was at the rafting when Awe led a detachment through the crowded docks. An officer armed with a machine began looking at the waterfront stalls the river people used to tie their property to the barges. Following fishermen leaped into the water after their dugouts. One man tried to step into his dugout and it was broken on him. When he slipped out from under him, he lost his balance, slipped backward, and hit his head against another canoe. He submerged and then floated to the surface. Goggles. The water floated around him as he deflated stern.

Later, I found Awe at a table outside his cabin. He was writing reports in his cubicle, his hand. I asked what had happened to the man who hit his head. Awe shrugged. "He died." "You don't stop?"

"He was a fisherman. They don't pay. They can't do us down. Why would we stop?"

ABUNDANCE And then, like that, we reached Kamukha. The trip began had taken exactly fifteen days. I sailed with neither a bang nor a whimper, our progress simply ceased. The routine

morning, as Oscar the engineer and I went standing on the bridge, Awe and his consort in the CHICAGO SKULLS T-shirt escorted a group of about twenty river people up the stern and ordered them to sit at the foot. "Let stand—me," Oscar said. The stowaways.

Awe launched into a rant about the river. The men were dressed in rousing fragments of clothing. Their feet were bleached and leprous from years of standing in the puddles inside their dugouts. The women had their hair in tight cornrows and wore African wrap skirts. One produced a basket and offered it to a toddler who seemed too old to be nursing.

"They don't look worried," I said. "They're not. The police will make those who have money pay. They will take the rest to Kamukha, and that is where they go to anyway."

The police visited their frustration with this sense of affairs later that afternoon. I was at the rafting when Awe led a detachment through the crowded docks. An officer armed with a machine began looking at the waterfront stalls the river people used to tie their property to the barges. Following fishermen leaped into the water after their dugouts. One man tried to step into his dugout and it was broken on him. When he slipped out from under him, he lost his balance, slipped backward, and hit his head against another canoe. He submerged and then floated to the surface. Goggles. The water floated around him as he deflated stern.

Later, I found Awe at a table outside his cabin. He was writing reports in his cubicle, his hand. I asked what had happened to the man who hit his head. Awe shrugged. "He died." "You don't stop?"

"He was a fisherman. They don't pay. They can't do us down. Why would we stop?"

ABUNDANCE And then, like that, we reached Kamukha. The trip began had taken exactly fifteen days. I sailed with neither a bang nor a whimper, our progress simply ceased. The routine



The docks were crawling with river carp, otters, wild pigs, brown hoes, dead bats, and trussed baby crocodiles.

we had followed—with no narrow results, an intimidating sense of confinement, an disturbing spectacle and the experience that we accept them without judgment—disappeared into the past. It became a tale to tell.

A light rain fell heavy onto the river as the boat drew up to the Kamukha pier. It was 6:30 a.m. We tipped Men, held the stowed and Kate the cook and passed out the bottled water and turned food we had not used. Porters carried our bags through the rain to the customs shed. Each city in Zaire is a scene under perfect conditions, with its own arrangement of shadows. Mark and Graham, being powerless, were immediately detained by gleeful officials. Josh and I were told that we could go after we had checked in with the intelligence police.

"Where are they?" "Just down the road. This river will show you."

The guide had an rubber boots that reached his knees. He led us, with our bags, up a hill and into town. We plodded on and on, past more covered offices and rotting hangars. I turned

steadily. Finally, out where the market fields began we came to a rented house. A functionary in a dripping raincoat studied our documents and pronounced himself satisfied. "But you must see the chief," he said.

"All right." "Only he is not here." "When will he arrive?" "Since he does not have a car, he will not arrive until the rain stops. It may not be until this evening."

"We will go to the hotel and return later," Josh said. "No. You must wait for the chief." Josh took out his cigarette. I hadn't smoked during the day in years, but I lit up as well: the uncertainties of the present eclipsed long-term concerns like cancer. We didn't offer a cigarette to the functionary. The smoker divided me his workshop, which had no glass. Rain splattered in the doorway. After an hour, the immensity of the situation caused Josh to lose his temper.

"Why are we being held prisoner?" he asked angrily. "We have committed no crime."

"You are not prisoners." "Then why can't we go to the hotel?"

"You can." "What was there to say? The functionary accepted a cigarette. Boots led us back through the rain to a hotel called the Zaire Palace, where a customer messenger declared a sign on its wall. My room had no air conditioning, no screens or soap. The walls were water stained, the carpet matted. A porter brought with him a single light bulb which he carefully screwed into a metal lamp that had no shade.

Early in the afternoon, we checked back in with the intelligence police. The van had stopped, and the chief had arrived. "You are free to go," he said after examining our papers. We asked about Mark and Graham. "The South Africans are still in the dock. They have problems."

HUMAN FLESH Mark and Graham were freed at the end of the day having each paid a hundred dollars to the intelligence official and a hundred dollars

to the intelligence chief. At twilight came on, we set out for a walk, and at a sidewalk café called Palm Beach, we came across one of the pilots from the boat. His name was Dicu Donat, 'Gift of God.' He was drinking Pilsener and waved us to join him.

We went through several large beers quickly—it had been that sort of day—and talked with Dicu Donat about the food we had eaten on the trip. Beans, crocodile meat, vegetable soup.

"I like snails," Dicu Donat said. He had recorded guitar and musical instruments and was rapidly becoming drunk. "It makes you strong."

"What about monkey?"

"The one meat none of us had wanted to try."

"Monkey is very good. I like a young monkey that the best is gorilla."

"Gorilla?"

"Yes. The arms of the gorilla are the best meat there is. It tastes just like human flesh."

Cannibals in central Zaire had been evidenced only in recent decades, the dope-dealer wannabes who had seized Kaungpa for 50 days in 1976, dressed in monkey skins and led by a witch doctor, had reportedly been cannibals. I wanted to pursue Dicu Donat's startling revelation. But he may have had some connection to the wannabes, and I was afraid of meeting him.

Two girls had been bringing us our beers, and one of us commented on how beautiful the younger of them was. "Do you want her?" Dicu Donat asked. Without waiting for an answer, he summoned her over, and they spoke for a minute in Lingala. "She's yours if you want her," Dicu Donat said.

The girl sat down with us. She had pale brown skin, delicate features, and an air of slightly vacant expression. She was not a prostitute. And Dicu Donat was not a pimp; he did not even know the girl. It seemed instead that white men were so fantastically exotic that the idea of a girl in Kinshasa doing a sexual transaction from one of them was inconceivable.

One of us—we made a pact never to reveal who it was—took Dicu Donat up on the offer of the girl. It was a long and sleepless night, a night of

whining mosquitoes, warm breath, dry mouth, and the residual curdle of a minor venereal virus. The next morning, at a hamburger breakfast in the boat's messy dining room, the gaily party reported that the girl had been complacent but always consistently positive except when, as they were dressing in the down light, she had begun to cry at the prospect of being left behind.

The more that the entire night of carnal indulgence, shocked the men into recognition of the girl's humanity, and that added remorse to his other concerns. He explained that he had grided the girl about her sexual history, she was a virgin and had had only one boyfriend, who was now studying in Belgium.

"And you believed her?"

"I think she was telling the truth."

"But you of course used a condom."

"Well, no."

"What?"

"I didn't have one."

Sleeping with the girl, whose acquiescence was so serene that it lacked the quality of free will, was bad enough. But given the AIDS-infection rate, which we had all discussed exhaustively to do so without a condom was worse. It was without a condom, however, to be without a condom was worse. It was without a condom, however, to be without a condom was worse.

Though it is tempting to tie the episode with the girl as the culmination of the journey to the inevitable outcome of the breeding, death, blood, here, and despair, we had encountered the dramatic descent into Comorian darkness—that would be to blame Zaire, to blame Africa, and that would be neither far nor truthful. Africa allowed you to forget yourself, it didn't force you to. But it did make you realize how thin, how porous, is the coherence we all impose on our lives. And it seemed essential to understand that it was imposed on us, enormous fear, a way, always, of dressing.

DISCO DANCING Mark and Graham flew out early that morning. Josh and I caught a later flight to Goma, a small town on small volcanic mountains on the eastern border. We arrived late in

the afternoon and the following morning set out for the refugee camp, which seemed to me to represent the most outrageous irony in all of Zaire. The most efficiently run operation in the country, the camp benefited not Zaireans but neighboring Ruanda who had fled Ruanda after bushwaring upwards of five hundred thousand Tutsi but soldiers, probably, turned as away as the guns, demanding yet more permits.

Early the next day we dragged our bags out on the tarmac at the Goma airport. The sun blazed. The sky was silent and windowless. Insects chirped on the dry grass. At ten o'clock, a high-winged Fokker touched down. The pilot, a Kenyan named Mohammed, said he was flying on to the town of Bukavu empty but picking up a full load of Rwandan refugees there for the return to Nairobi. We pleaded with him while he filled his gas tank. He agreed to take us if we paid him \$500 apiece.

At Bukavu, Mohammed disappeared into the terminal but returned to say that the airport officials refused to let the passengers leave until they paid a fee. Time passed. The Fokker's engine ticked in the heat. By mid-afternoon the passengers still had not been released.

"It's getting darker here," Mo muttered said. "Now we'll be there tomorrow on the way back."

Just then, the passengers emerged out of the terminal. Everyone boarded. The refugees' luggage—mattress trunks, boxes, plastic suitcases—were shoved into the aisle. With the addition of Josh and me, we had two more passengers than seats. Mohammed told us to double up. The Rwandan scuffling of heads and hair who squeezed in with me quite literally had to put her legs in my lap.

When the plane took off, the urgently noisy still alarm sounded, stopped, then sounded again. Josh bopped. "We were overweight, the plane couldn't gain altitude. Mohammed stopped trying to climb, and we skidded along the tops of trees, vomiting on both sides of us. After a minute, Mohammed again tried to pull back the stick. Again the alarm went off—hey-hey-hey bop-hey-and again we nudged the nose down. Finally, we flew between two mountains, and the land beneath us dropped away.

An hour outside Nairobi, Mohammed turned back and called, "Are you ready for dinner?" He made a violent, waving motion with his hand. Less than a minute later, we flew directly into the storm. A dark gray blur enveloped us. Rain hammered on all the windows. The plane pitched, shuddered, plummeted, and lurched. The engines screamed unevenly. There was no air in the cabin. The stale, brassy odor of the Rwandan next to me intensified.

I felt sure that if I didn't throw up, someone else would, and as that rose, everyone would vomit. I looked back. Every passenger—a woman, four children, seven men—stood at me with enormous white eyes and frozen, agonized grimaces.

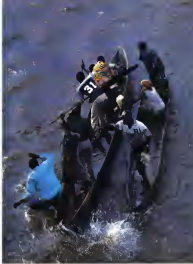
The plane flew through the storm for forty minutes. I realized that until then, I had never truly understood what the word *endless* meant. When we landed, I tried to hug all the refugees. The boat I could manage, once I was on the tarmac, was to reach up through the pilot's window and gratefully swing Mohammed's hand. He winked and shook his finger.

"Fun, ch?" he said.

THE CROSSING The next day, I flew alone. Another small plane, but the weather was beautiful down to a soft camp in the Massi Mara, a national park on the Kenya-Uganda border. That afternoon, a guide named Steven took me out in a Land Rover. We passed pandanus herds of grazing elephants. Giraffes moved in their slow massive lurch through the darkness. We came to a small bluff above the Mara River, and Steven was suddenly enormous with excitement. "The wildebeests are coming," he said. "This is rare. You are lucky."

An immense herd of wildebeests—several hundred, maybe even a thousand—was massing on the far bank. The late-afternoon sun gave the river a golden-pink glow. The animals stared at the dusk as they pressed back and forth. Suddenly, they began plunging into the water.

Because only two narrow gullies led up through the bluff, the wildebeests quickly backed up when they reached the near bank. The bottleneck confined them, and their confusion turned to terror. Whole some of them



One day, the fishermen began to fight. A river pothole made a good weapon.

piled up in single file up the two gullies. Others tried to climb the steep bluff but fell back, their wet, hairy bodies twisting with desperation. Some, in their panic, scrambled onto the backs of others, who were pushed down below the surface of the churning river. The pink dust rose everywhere and with it a deafening groan from the bewildered animals.

After twenty minutes, the line wildebeests, moving and slick, their sides the color of burntash above, lumbered up the gully, and the herd spread out across the plain to graze. But the river was thick with wildebeests that had been trampled in the

crossing. They floated gently on their sides—4 counted twenty-eight—and not all were dead. One waddled head to head out of the water and then sank back. Another submerged except for its head, poked the air with a slow, helpless motion.

Downriver, two crocodiles headed upstream, snapping, wading trailing outward in their snouts out through the water. Two other crocodiles, enormous, fat creatures with hollow the red of ed drums, languorously waddled across a sandbar and into the river. What defines the drama of Africa, I thought, is that beauty is still inseparable from horror. ■

From Olympic
sprite to
femme fatale,
Oksana Baiul
is "not anymore
little girl, you
know."

By Michael
Angeli



OF ICE AND MEN

OLEKHA IS BLISSING. In the mirror, she can see her there, in all her famous Ukrainian slowness, her long freckles tucked between her lips, her body curled up in the shape of a perfect score. She might be dreaming of all these near '60s she racked up winning the gold medal for figure skating in '64. Now, at eighteen, she's already scraped away a suitable chunk of the big, slippery world. Barbara Walters named her one of the year's Ten Most Fascinating Personalities, CBS did a segment of the week about her, and those two winners of this ice, Bill and Hillary, asked Olekha on the White House ice once but twice.

As for me, I want to sparkle her—also notice, because soon she will sparkle, with the slowness from her eyes, and become the dream Andrew. One Clay again. I am driving Olekha from her home in Conestoga, where she lives in an Olympic-style village surrounded by Russian experts I'm taking her to a gala weekend in Manhattan. The Chechen rebels have it easier.

Ah, the girl:
"You have to turn back there," heaves Olekha, her voice deep and sticky. "You know problems? This probably too big for you. Very big. We are now to Boston."

"Why don't you have your seat belt on yet?" I ask her for the third time. Up front, I'm facing a moment that sounds like quaters snacking against the windshield.

"I told you. Because I trust you. Don't need seat belt."

I'd been told earlier by her 18 women that Olekha was looking for a boyfriend. All right, then. What does Olekha look for in a man?

"Nothing," she means.

"Oh, come on, don't give me that. Otherwise, you'd be with that guy facing the gears back at your skating rink."

"I like that guy," Olekha proclaims.

"He has a good heart. If a guy has a good heart, I like them. I don't care what they look like. Well... I like long blond hair," she concludes. But what if the had to support that Russian-based dude with the jambo-ize arms?

"Why people always say, 'If he doesn't have any money, will you still love him?' Of course if he doesn't have any money and I love him, money means nothing. So what? That's my money. I'm only eighteen, so I don't know about life, nothing. I'm not Rousseau, forty-three years old. She's old lady, old enough to know about life. Not me."

I can see Olekha something in the mirror window, her eyes going in circular in plastic-explosive material. Money, or how much she's making, is going to remain her secret. Rumbling, I ask her about Donetsk.

"Oh, yeah, sure. His winter. You think I'm dumb or what?"

"All right. What about Plotsky? You know him?"

"Of course."

"What about Plotsky?"

"I don't know no Plotsky."

"There isn't a Plotsky. That was a trick question." Olekha is laughing now, laughing her skate protectors off, spilling orange paint all over the backseat. I'm enjoying her mirth with a touch of nostalgia. It reminds me of the way we all bleed Khrushchev to be happy.

REMEMBER THIS: While Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding played out their version of *Melba Place* in front of a worldwide audience, it was this little kid from who stole the show at the Olympics. (She has plans to compete in the '98 games.) But it was her performance in the Ryder Cup Challenge last fall that converted those who watch skating only as an alternative to Mafick remains. Dressed as a human girl, Olekha dragged figure skating into the twenty-first century with a routine so witty in its sensuality that when it ended, you'd swear everyone in the arena had a delirious grin. We were seated, everyone captivated. Olekha had grace, precision, and refinement like the others, but she brought something else to skating besides the usual opera and schizoid.

Not content with being observed that night, she spoke to us like Mata Hari in very sharp shoes. Olekha had soul.

"I got in my pants before that performance because somebody tell some jokes." Olekha—now sitting backward without her seat belt on—diminishes the performance. "It's not competition. It's about everybody lose everybody—no fights." When I explains her to listen her seat belt, she starts on me again.

"Look at you. Your eyes red. Like alcohol's."

Maybe I'm just trying a little too hard to see the road through this hurricane. Now, face front and put your belt on.

"Ah, he is plus sexy now." Olekha laughs aloud, a stomachful, ha, ha, ha, brassy as a trumpet. I think she's coming around.

OLEKHA IS WEEDING: Since we have a private table at the Ritz, the wait

fall before an audience of one.
"No, no, I didn't see movie about my life," she tells me, "because I don't like. I don't like go through that again. It upsets me because people think, 'Oh, my God, who is she? Who is her family?'"

For a long time, she asked herself the same question. Olekha's parents separated when she was two years old. She was too young to understand the disappearance of her father and later become curious. Olekha was told by her mother that her father was dead. At thirteen, she would lose her mother to cancer.

"She did that to protect me because other girls my age had these fathers. But I also think the past told me that because she's afraid that I might find him and go to his house. I heard from lots of people that he was alcoholic—and face red eyes—that he just split from my mother."

"Maybe he known. Yeah, that's my daughter," maybe

Money what? It was with grace, precision, and nerve like this that Olekha revolutionized the judges at the '94 Olympics.





he's afraid. He probably knows of me, but like lots of Russian people with little or no money, what can he do? I really want to find him and now I start wondering on it because I feel inside that he's not dead."

She pauses for a moment to tifle with the shirt of her little fashion dress, then rubs: "Your eyes are still red."

Conversation flows like vodka at a Gorbachev mixer now. Olmosa loves Polytechnic, she does a Mercedes the color of her hair, Jeff-O, Phil Downham is big in Russia, and everybody in America is left-handed. She demands to know why Howard Stern is wearing a dress on the cover of his book and if Demi Moore's breasts are fake. Her eyes roll when she considers the prospect of her upcoming ninety-one city tour of world figure-skating championships. About the differences between living in Ukraine and living in America, she says with a shrug: "People are more open where. People read in America, Ukraine, Paris, Italy. They just do it in different languages."

In the next it takes to complete a trip and she turns to the changing face of amateur skating. "Time of all" she sighs, "too many rules" and now it's all little kids, twelve, eleven. And girls don't care about beauty, just jumping, jumping, jumping. And girls don't care about artistic impression. And girls all the time want to look like me. Plus all the pressure. It makes for hysteria, anorexia. It happens a lot in my sport. Some people think maybe I'm anorexic, but I'm too fat for skating pants. One hundred and ten pounds. I grow three inches in past year." When I express my amazement, she nods sagely. "Sure. I'm not anymore little girl, you know."

OLMOZA IS HERE. As a photo shoot, interview and a series of random geometrical circumstances have united the two of us to converse, unavoidably. We are both fighting the little muscles in our eyeballs to keep from looking at each other. The consideration here is that if I get up and move, I run the risk of possibly offending her while ceasing my own (culturally based) insecurities. If I stay my centerless preoccupation will change from the cyanide. During the shoot, Olmosa is poised, sophisticated, and unusually happy posing as some gaudy Soviet version of Barbra. She still has some of the Old World making around in

her, but through some fine cultural espionage, she has the moon down the walk, the attitude—Olmosa could pass.

The narrative qualities of the photo shoot carry over into the night. As she poses for pictures with a startled John Waters, the paces of a downtown nightclub are trying to coax Olmosa into dancing on the bar with the go-go boys.

"I feel like don't here," Olmosa whispers, but between talking looking with my friends and hugging me, she's thoroughly enjoying herself. She insists that only the Russians know how to check and that she can't keep her eyes off Wayne Gretzky when he's skating. Sergei Rodmanov is her favorite, Mark Messier makes a frown, and Mario Lemieux gets thumbs-down because he's bald. When it's suggested that a hockey-playing boyfriend might be waiting for a little later off somewhere, Olmosa gives us hell.

"No boyfriend. Besides, he'll be scared of me. If he was a normal boy, he'd run very fast from me. I don't want boyfriend. I have girlfriend. I don't want broken heart."

Then someone asks her about women.

"Women? You mean like him? I would never have a husband like him. If I have boyfriend like you," she jabs my shoulder. "I'd have black heart lover."

"You're going to make him cry," someone cautions Olmosa. She shows my portrait on a television, giving me Ross Perot's ears and a pig's nose. I chide her for teasing me.

"Love you?" Olmosa comes over all innocent now, meek as an all-day nudger. "I'm not teasing you at all. If I start teasing, awkward. Sometimes when I start teasing, people just stand up and start leaving. People can't take the pressure."

All of the noise and chatter momentarily drink past her to another corner of our table. As she takes a little up from her drink, she seems out of place, both innocent and world-weary, the mask of self-reliance cracked a little.

She will be relatively young when her turn to wait for the scores and the bouquets ends and the question begs. Without teasing, what now?

"Everything," she answers breathlessly. "You sound like you can't wait for it."

"Why? I love to date." She pauses to crunch a few ice cubes in her mouth, then adds with a sleepy wink, "You understand me now."

Absolutely so.



Olmosa, queen of the night. Compulsory dancing (top), lifestyle wrapping (center), and jolting the camera (left), who gets low marks. Opposite: "If I start teasing, ooooo... people can't take the pressure."



A FEW GOOD NAZIS

FOR YEARS, PRIVATE JIM BURMEISTER AND HIS BUDDIES PROUDLY DISPLAYED SWASTIKAS IN THEIR BARRACKS AT FORT BRAGG, NORTH CAROLINA. SO WHY DID IT TAKE THE MURDER OF A BLACK COUPLE FOR THE U. S. ARMY TO NOTICE ITS LITTLE WHITE-SUPREMACIST PROBLEM? A SPECIAL REPORT FROM INSIDE THE BUNKER.

BY DANIEL VOLL

In the barracks of the 82nd Airborne, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, January 1966.

3 White Soldiers Held in Slaying Of Black Couple

Charged For Being Protectors
 Had Supremacist Symbols, Police Say

By William Bradford Huie
 Staff Writer of The Washington Post

Three white soldiers from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, are charged with the slaying of a black couple, a 30-year-old man and a 27-year-old woman, on the night of December 6, 1991. The couple was shot in the back of their heads while they were sleeping in their room at the Fort Bragg Hotel. The soldiers, James Burmeister Jr., Randy Meadows and Patrick Malcolin, are charged with first-degree murder. The couple, Jimmy and Judy Wright, were a young couple who had been together for several years. They were both active members of the Ku Klux Klan. The soldiers, who are all in their late 20s or early 30s, are charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. The soldiers are charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. The soldiers are charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty.

James Burmeister Jr., 27, of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, is charged with the slaying of the couple. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty.

Randy Meadows, 28, of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, is charged with the slaying of the couple. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty.

Patrick Malcolin, 29, of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, is charged with the slaying of the couple. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty. He is charged with the slaying of the couple while they were on duty.

The accused killers belonged to a shroud cult of Fort Bragg that was more important to them than the army.



Panel Orders White House Aides' Notes

White House Subpoena
 Two Privileged Claims
 For Meeting in 1991



Army's Criminal Investigation Division had been a problem ever before that. Following his two bars and "honoring" them. The bad feeling government on my say for the last couple months," he told a friend back home. "They think I'm a racist or something." So Jimmy had been laying low. Let everybody else live at Bragg with the niggers, he was happier out here in the sticks.

In his bedroom, he had five different Nazi flags, including a Hitler Youth flag, which hung above an eight-by-ten photograph of his sister Lisa. It was among the third anniversary of her death at age nineteen from leukemia and her memory was one of the few things he wasn't ashamed to admit, that could make Jimmy cry.

With Burmeister's new grumpy, Zoc scampering underfoot, the soldiers dined several times of Milwaukee's Best and cracked up their favorite white supremacist hard, slow-motion or Malcolin Wright talked about religion and his fear of white genocide. Malcolin had a spiderweb tattoo on his elbow. One night, Wright carried a spiderweb, Jimmy knew only as he talked somebody a nigger or a faggot. And though Malcolin hadn't earned his cross, Jimmy admired the spiderweb as if it were a medal of honor.

The three popped their beers and got ready to go out on the soccer. The black nigger, great point that Burmeister's father had given him after his nineteenth birthday lay on the coffee table. As he was leaving the trailer, Burmeister made the point into his belt and said, "Maybe I'll earn my spiderweb tonight."

Burmeister started on driving Wright climbed into the bedsheet, and Jimmy handed the gun to Meadows, who snatched it under the front seat.

Ever since his fight, Jimmy had been growing his hair so this felt harder to peg as a man disheveled. Tonight, he didn't even wear and lace in his Doc Martens, which would have marked him immediately. He was wearing his black flight jacket, but since he'd removed the Nam patches, he could be just about anybody in Fayetteville, a city with forty-two thousand active-duty soldiers.

They could drive him the outside symbols, but inside he knew his allegiance. When he set off for prearranged materials from the disheveled man

Blond and brown, he'd signed his name. Jim Burmeister, 28. The right knee of the alphabet, Red Hater. Sometimes when he was alone, listening to Shrewsbury, he'd do the Nam salute, and it made him proud to be of use to a movement that was about truth. Malcolin was good to have along. He'd taken the Church of the Greater Loyalty oath, and he abhorred the import news who were not white, the real news. They both believed in the sovereignty of the real holy war—Babylon they liked to call it. But then, they needed some dinner, and a little more beer muscle. They headed to Square's Pub, a cozy, woody joint a couple of miles from base that serves barley pie and Guinness stout. Just down the street from Square's they passed Luigi's, an Italian restaurant where two years before, a young 18th Airborne sergeant named Ben French had a bad night drinking and killed

himself by a twelve-pack purchased at a convenience store they hunted blades—first in a trailer park and then down Main Street Road through other black neighborhoods.

Burmeister and Meadows had done this before. It was fun to knock somebody in the head and run. Black men or crack dealers were the best targets—they'd walk right up to the car. Whenever they saw a black person Jim cocked his finger in if he were shooting and said, "Die nigger." But with each sighting, there was so much more light or there were too many people around.

Wright gave directions to another downtown neighborhood. Burmeister reached under the seat and pulled out the pistol and held it in his lap. Suddenly, Jim said, "There's a nigger couple right there."

Jackie Burden, twenty-seven, and Michael James, thirty-one, were out for midnight walk. Meadows drove past the couple, who were walking down Hill Street, a dirt road in a neighborhood of old mill houses. He coasted the car around and dove past them again. Malcolin said, "Let's go out here."

Wright left his flight pack and booster in the backseat and directed Meadows to park around the corner. If they weren't back in fifteen minutes, he was to return to the trailer. Burmeister tracked the gun as he left.

The two soldiers left the car and approached the couple. Burden and James were friends. Jackie Burden was planning to become a nursing assistant. Michael James, a welder by trade, was disabled from a construction accident, but he put guns out of prison in August on a drug charge and had a plane ticket to New Jersey as he could be with his wife and three children for Christmas.

The soldiers walked past them on the dirt street, stopped, and turned toward the couple, who were less than seven feet away. Burmeister drew his gun. Running his long, slender arm he closed the gap by three feet. James was five feet, with two shots to the head, the second from within eight inches. Wright would later tell police that Burmeister tried to hand him the gun but that he refused. Burden tried to run and was reaching into his pocket to clasp a small brown-handled knife, once spilling out



A member of the 18th Airborne wears his breast allegiance.

four people with a pump-action shotgun. After that, following in Fayetteville started teaching one another how to spot "killer pigs" before some other rat from Fort Bragg made his presence known to the world.

At about ten o'clock the soldiers handed the gun to Meadows, a topnotch club on Bragg Boulevard. They drank some or four pitchers of beer when a black dancer strided onto the stage. Jimmy and Malcolin turned away. "I don't want to see this nigger," Jimmy said, and then, at 11:30, abruptly announced, "Hey, we're going." Meadows got behind the wheel this time. Burmeister sat in the passenger seat, and Wright in the back next to the beer cooler.

"Drive where there are niggers and not a whole lot of people around where it's dark," Burmeister said, according to sealed police reports. For the next half

symbols which purport hatred or violence.

Q. Can I have flags in my room that show pride in my heritage?

A. Yes, if the flag does not offend the people living in that room with you or is not potentially offensive.

A last memo dated December 18, 1995, and posted nearby, announces the Army's policy on extremist organizations.

Army policy does not prohibit passive activities such as non member ship, receiving literature in the mail, or presence in an area, though strongly discouraged in incompatible with military service.

Specialist Michael F. Fallon, a member of the American Viking Regiment and one of Jan Barmester's closest Army friends, quipped when he returned to his barracks room one day last summer and found that his Nazi flags had been ripped from his walls. He marched down and complained to his sergeant, who barked, "Fallon, you keep your key above your door, don't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did it ever occur to you that one of your friends might be playing a prank on you?"

"No, sir."

Later that night, to his relief, Fallon found his beloved silk flags safe under his pillow, and he put them back on his wall, so that his barracks room again looked like a Nazi outpost. "I had four Nazi flags hanging on the wall," he says today, "and five World War II German recruiting posters."

Had you walked into Fallon's room in the barracks on any given night during the past year, you'd have seen a screen of drunken skinheads plying

the glumest separation of the sexes. One night, you'd have heard Fallon, polluted on Goldschlager bellowing at the top of his lungs out in the hall, "Sieg heil! Sieg heil! Niggers go home! White power!"

Tonight, January 14, Fallon is joined by two other members of the American Viking Regiment, Specialist Steven Meneau and his wife. Among the new recruits who rented out the room in their mobile home to Jan Barmester. They've brought along their seven-month old son, Jan, who is named after the lead singer of Skrewdriver, the line band Stevie. These people watched Barmester through the most significant changes of his life. During at least one

impression, Fallon even had Barmester's green Riger in this room.

"My fingerprints were on the gun," Fallon says now.

"Don't worry," Meneau says. "Jan cleaned it a thousand times."

"Any one of us could have been with them that night," Fallon says. "I would have been with them if they called and asked me if I wanted to go."

"I can understand why the gun came out," Meneau says. "Jan can't fight. I watched him get his ass whopped in his barracks one night. By a black guy."

After the raid, Fallon took down his flags and smashed the swastika emblem that he had openly worn on his flight jacket. "I'm under cover. I don't dress like this," he says, pulling at his raggy shirt, which hides a scar across his forehead. "I usually wear short-sleeved shirts, my tats showing, my suspenders. I had a big swastika armband. It took me two hours to take that fucker off."

Fallon's concrete barracks walls are now bare, the recruiting posters rolled up in his closet. His head itches from growing out his hair, and he's looking

forward to wearing his skinhead uniform again but says that now that he's recognized, he's getting laid more often.

He passes around bottles of German beer. "We're Airborne," Steve Meneau says, "the most physically fit also holes on earth."

A mixed television plays *The Last of the Mohicans*. Jan chorales happily on the bed with his mother. Steve sits in a chair near the door of the narrow, dorm-size room. Lucious, self-pampered, and not at all beautiful by nature, Steve Meneau is quite handsome in the image of the American Viking Regiment. It was Meneau who romanced Lobo into the show and who shaved Lobo's head for the first time two years ago. "I've been a good soldier," he says of his seven years as a cook. "The Army and we could have our beliefs." Meneau took the American flag off his flight jacket when older skinheads told him it was the "Jew flag because Jews run the government."

On the television, the local evening news is now showing third Airborne paratroopers in full gear boarding a plane for a six month, peacekeeping mission in the Middle East.

"She, that's Teri?" Fallon, shows "That was Teri, dated Off to the States."

Fallon and Meneau identify the soldier as Teri Verhose, commander of the American Viking Regiment. "Teri's a skinhead and a Meneau," Fallon says gleefully, "and he's going to Israel!"

A month earlier, on December 19, when questioned by police at the Army's Criminal Investigation Division, Verhose admitted organizing the Vikings and provided numbers in the range of "about twenty to sixty members."

Fallon was drunk when he was interrogated and readily identified segment members in snapshots confiscated after the December raid. In one photograph, Barmester sucks the barrel of a pistol held by a gunrunner. In another, Viking soldiers are smoking before a swastika, making the Nazi salute.

The most dangerous and committed of their confederates, the soldiers all agree, were not on Fort Rucker's original list of suspected extremists. One of four recruit's members in the month prior to the raid was a former member of the notorious Confederate Homeowners who was getting advanced training in



On January 21, Esquire photographed skinhead members of the 82nd Airborne both on and off post with the Nazi memorabilia from their barracks. Above, Steve Meneau cradles his son Jan.



demolition in an air force base in Florida. Known as Big Steve, he had been sentenced to 15 years on January 10 and was scheduled to be paroled to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, later that year.

"Big Steve's got a serious commitment to racial war," says Manseau.

"He's got more than that," adds Fallon. "Big Steve's got a plan."

"The reason he joined the Army," whispers Cherry, "is to gain skills to further the movement."

In honor of their devoted friendship, Big Steve and his wife have vowed to nurse their next son after Jim Burmaster. In the days after the killings, both Manhouse and Big Steve sent word to the Wilkes regular Steve counseled all to "stand by your white brother" and raise money for his defense. Van-House, mindful that they all could come under scrutiny, admonished them to "grow your hair, don't be conspicuous."

How many must skinheads are there in the family?

Counting on his fingers, Fallon recites off names: "Dennis, Dan, Sean, Big Jim, Big Steve, Matt, Tina, Tom, Trent, the two brothers, Duncan, the dude from another country, Ed, Spauld..." He continues for a moment. "That's twenty-one right there," he says. "There are maybe thirty-five of us who are in jail or who have recently gotten out."

Manseau says racial holy war is inevitable, but he regards Jimmy's actions as premature. "His counterproductive, going-batting," he says. "When you look back, it hurts the cause of separation." Fallon points to the baby, now sleeping peacefully on the bed. "He's what it's all about. That's what the whole movement is about." He quotes the Poem of Wards of David Lane, the imprisoned leader of the Order, the now defunct armed wing of the Aryan Nations: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children."

These are the words that Burmaster once painted on his barracks walls alongside a swastika. Held out White Ram shampoo as a medicine, an old girl faced says. Under normal light, the symbols were invisible, but they glowed faintly under Jimmy's black light.

To these soldiers and their white supremacist confederates, the exploits of the Order are heroic and serve as a prototype for action. Fallon, like Burmaster, regards white supremacists

Robert Matthews, who was killed after robbing armored cars for the Order, as a martyr who stole from the government to further the white cause.

"They are the Robin Hoods of the white race," Fallon says. "They robbed, they kept a little to support themselves. They gave the rest to other like organizations. I have a song about it at home."

As if to save himself from complete denudation withered, Fallon pulls out a sweatshirt tape from his white power stash. "That was one of Jim's favorites,"

he says. "My wife and I are for appreciation of the race, not for genocide," he says. "Most of the guys we hung out with were for the genocidal view. I think Jim pretty much wanted genocide."

"Kuh, he did," Cherry says softly. She then tells of the night last fall she found Jim and Randy Meadows thumping through the Yellow Pages, looking for a "Jewish synagogue to destroy."

"I didn't think anybody would be that stupid," she says, "so I didn't pay them any mind."

ONE NIGHT LAST FALL, A FRIEND RECALLS, JIM AND RANDY LOOKED THROUGH THE YELLOW PAGES FOR A "SYNAGOGUE TO DESTROY."

Cherry says. "He played it cautiously."

As the song unfolds into a thrashing chorus, all three sing along, eyes closed, transfixed, as they mouth the following refrain: "Hail! Hail! Hail victory!" Fallon and Manseau thrust their arms upward in repeated Nazi salutes.

On the muted television, the local ABC station begins its celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday with a midnight showing of King, starring Paul Winfield.

In the room, there is no Martin Luther King's birthday, only "National Nigger Day." And yet, when Gary Jones, a black soldier with high-level security clearance, enters to answer a video, Fallon engages him about the plight of the embattled skinhead. "It's a white-burn, pure and simple," Jones says. "If they're going to look out the racist here, they need to start with the blacks."

"You think they're looking for black money?" Fallon asks Jones. "We have a Crip right on this floor."

"We've got Crips all over Bragg," Jones answers. "They just want the to go away, so they're just beating every body who looks like a skinhead. There is no real segregation."

Steve smiles his infant son on his arm and begins feeding him with a bottle. Compared with the more volatile Fallon, he has been fairly quiet all night. As a soldier who preceded Burmaster into the movement and sustained him in it, he now wants to make sure his views

The next morning, returning from town, she noticed that a car that had been abandoned on the roadside for a long time was no longer there. Back at the trailer, she mentioned this to Jim and Randy. "They smiled at each other," she recalls, "and then told me how they had busted the windshield with pool balls in a truck and dented the car with gas and set it on fire. They watched it burn and explode."

Later the dawn by the spot. There were burnt marks and the grass was charred where the car had been. It was then that Cherry Manseau, driving home in her Geo Metro with the Mel Hater bumper sticker, began to realize that those ideas had consequences.

That evening, she watched the news to see if Tennessee's synagogue had been firebombed.

7:45 p.m. on December 7, 1995, the morning after the James and Burmaster murders, two Louisville police raided the Meadows' mobile home. Jim Burmaster was curled up in his bed, and Malcolm Wilkins was on the couch. A sound was detected in Burmaster's pistol, and a sawed-off shotgun was within reach of Wayne. The soldiers didn't resist arrest and were escorted, wearing boxer shorts, to separate squad cars.

Among the evidence gathered in the search of Burmaster's room, the police found a dish of "vegetable casserole"

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ESQUIRE

Style Agenda

A Fresh Look for Spring

With warmer temperatures upon us, ESQUIRE proudly kicks off its vintage programs for spring. Let Enquire's fashion editor help update your wardrobe with sportswear from Italy, compliments of the Italian Trade Commission's Moda Made in Italy program. Don't miss the presentation at your area.

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You could probably use a new top and a new bottom. And some new clothes wouldn't be bad either. Relax this spring in one of Huggies's 100% cotton Wrinkle-free™ pants—available at clothing stores near you. To receive a free Guy's Guide to dressing down, please call 800-4-HUGGIE.

WHEN HIS FATHER HEARD THE FBI WAS WATCHING JIMMY, HE CALLED HIS SON AND PLEADED, "WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING, STOP."

"Any one of us could have been with them that night," Mike Fallon says. "I would have been if they called and asked me to."

The dish itself contained a quarter pound of anisole gunpowder mixed with a half pound of fertilizer. Nearby were wires and specialty glue. Private Barman had been cooking a bomb.

That news should not have come as a surprise to either the Criminal Invention Division at Fort Bragg or to the FBI. Both agencies had been informed months before that an James Earl Ray Barman Jr. they had a budding terrorist on their hands.

In August 1994, Fort Bragg received a call from the district attorney of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. Because a couple of locals were in the habit of recording phone calls of their police scanners, the DA's office had in its possession a taped telephone call made from within the barracks of Fort Bragg by Jim Barman in which he complains to blow up "Therapist" police chief Tim Rovenburgh. The chief had, in Barman's view, unnecessarily injured one of his old Angel of Dark mess buddies. In the same conversation, Barman boasts that he can screech grenade launchers and is mopping-up bullets out of Fayetteville. Despite the fact that authorities at Fort Bragg were appalled of this conversation, Barman was later assigned to work in his unit's armory.

A year later, the CID at Fort Bragg was informed by the FBI of another even more disturbing Barman conversation. This one was taped by Chief Rovenburgh himself. On August 19, 1995, Barman requested technical assistance in the construction of a powerful C-4 bomb, which he was planning to transport across state lines. Jim's father was told of this tape and immediately called his son. "I want my gun back," he said plaintively. "The FBI is watching you. Whatever you're doing, stop." But in the fall of last year the CID and FBI proved only a mild inconvenience to Jim. He became aware that someone would occasionally talk him on a night out, but he seemed to derive pleasure from the circumlocution game. "What can they do?" he said to a friend. "I haven't gotten caught doing anything."

Given all that was known or suspected about Jimmy Barman, the question begs: just when does a tale to get expelled from the Army? Had he been openly homosexual, Barman would have been charged on immediately. But the true beneficiaries of the military's "Don't ask, don't tell" philosophy seem to be political extremists. As for the FBI, it seems they were waiting for Jimmy to do something, because they thought they had murder

Tenochy McVigil, said Chief Rovenburgh. "They wanted to go forward." In a country informed by the experience of Oklahoma City, the fact that someone is potentially dangerous as Barman was not taken more seriously is unfathomable.

But for the murders of Jodie Barman and Michael James Swanson would still adorn barracks walls at Fort Bragg, the American Whig Regiment would still be recruiting vigorously and the entire deathhead culture in the military would still be tolerated or ignored. The Pentagon has now acknowledged problems on at least four army bases and is investigating.

All the soldiers photographed by Enquire are being "chaperoned" by the Army, chiefly to ensure, for being photographed and not necessarily for just dead-end screams. American Whig Regiment commander Tom VanFosse didn't make the postcarding mission to the Sinai but had been scheduled to go until the murders. And on February 9, Big Steve was recalled to Fort Bragg to be questioned in the Army investigation.

Barman, Wright, and Meadows await trial in Fayetteville. And Brian "Lobo" Loboson, Barman's father in the movement, says he hopes Jimmy gets the death penalty.



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London
GENTLEMAN

MILAN REPORT

What's hip in Italian men's wear. Plus, new spring fashions.

By Woody Hochswender



NOW is a very good time for men to start paying attention to fashion. There's a lot happening, and most of it is good. Milan, perhaps the most important city in the world for men's clothing, has returned to its roots of first valuing with an edge, its impressive roster of designer houses—Armani, Versace, Gucci, Ferré, Valentino, Missoni, Prada, Dolce & Gabbana—is showing reasonable, fashionable clothes. And an emerging, daring group—Alberto Fallai, Enzo Angileri, and Carol Christian Poell—reimagining the Milan sex (see page 14).

With the Barneys bankruptcy tanking industry nerves, the top designers soon determined to make fashions that men will accept (even if the clothes will look far-out to some). What is the new point of view? The seventies' sexual and stylistic touchstones, especially for the shapes of jackets and trousers (jackets tend to be extremely fitted, with the addition of stretch fabrics to ease movement). Boat cut jeans are now the runway norm, with a thin leg flared slightly at the bottom. All the seventies' hallmarks are there—graphic print shirts, plaid pants, floppy lapels, fur vests, colored leathers and suede, military

Shirts from the remnants of Eeky, chokerlike from top left; short-sleeved T-shirt and leisure sweater with shirt and tie by Dolce & Gabbana; half-sleeved rib-knit sweater over plaid shirt and trousers by Missoni; women's stretch tailored high-waisted wool jacket by Christian Marciano; dark black turtleneck vest by Ferré; and boat double-breasted coat by Giorgio Armani.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUE AND CORINA LEGG

APRIL 1986 *ESQUIRE* 111

looks, regardless—but the same ten versions are surely better.

The trendless designers now seem engaged in perfecting the past. At Donatella Dolce and Stefano Gabbana's show in the program, notes for their recent show: "Fashion for more fashion's sake is dead. We are the death of the following words: trend, some punk and modern." The war gods in fashion has assumed a traditional stance.

The Dolce & Gabbana show, perhaps their least aggressive ever, was an ode to collegiate style: warm, fuzzy, and straightforward but not without the Italian neorealism spirit they are known for. The collection, for fall/winter 1998-99, contains many of the men's staples—fitted jackets, slacks, flat-front trousers, body-hugging shirts, slinky ties—but without the queerness experiments of past seasons. Shorn-already cashmere V-neck, worn with white shirts and striped ties, come straight from the crew and rooms of *Apolló*.

Gucci's Versace also likes the retro look but gives it more of a rock 'n' roll flavor. Military coats, animal prints, and leather, all revivify stor-



ies, appear throughout his latest collections, including the upcoming Versace.

One of the more pleasing story lines in fashion has been the revival of venerable houses like Gucci, which, under the direction of an American, Tom Ford, has re-made itself into the hippest house of the nineties. This season, Ford continues his bravura performance with snappy, manlength military coats, precisely tailored double-breasted suits, and tapered-leg, boot-cut trousers, which go over boots, sometimes in pony shoes, with thick soles and stacked heels.

Donatella's rock, leg look includes a long, fuzzy, oversized, left, Guatemalan T-shirt worn with a long leather blazer, below, Gianni Versace's youthful Versace line features bold striped shirts and flared acid-wash trousers, right.



Missoni, too, has found its moment again, with strong graphic lines and bold patterns. Like Gucci, this house revels in its history, dipping into the archive to redo its present hits. The signature Missoni look for 1998 is a stretch shirt or sweater over slim windbreaker pants or boardshort trousers.

So much in men's fashion is either a reflection of or a reaction to—the work



of Giorgio Armani. (The new, skimpier suit can be seen as a reaction to the fall-winter Armani style that had come to dominate men's wear.) This season, the master appears to be on a Buddha-like quest for self-perfection. His double-breasted suits, in soft fabrics with an ample shoulder, conform to the body but have enough structure to be beseemingly. His long, tailored leather coats and flared trousers, often striped with graphic stripes, are also superb. While other designers are out to reinvent the past, Armani is simply perfecting himself. ■

THE MILITARY LOOK

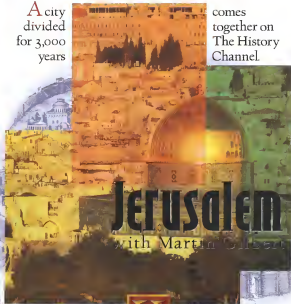


Military-inspired clothes have been marching the runways of Milan, part of the revival of aviator style that has been sweeping fashion. These include long, sometimes manlength coats, with double rows of metal buttons, fitted at the waist, with stand-up collars, as well as short, knee-length versions that resemble parkas, in leather and cashmere. There has also been a return of the epaulet, a shoulder strap used to keep military accoutrements in place, which was shown on

both coats and silk jackets by Gucci. Style designers were influenced by the recent "Bonds into Ploughshares" exhibit at the Guggenheim Institute in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Examples of the style, from left: a gray wool overcoat by Alberta Ferret; a midnight camel double-breasted coat by Valentino; and a leather coat with metal buttons by Gianni Versace.

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CAREER MOVES

The new linen suits go a step beyond cool and comfortable. Fabric technology and darker colors have made those old, rumpled tan suits yesterday's news. Equally appropriate in the executive suite or off-hours, these linens have the authority of classic business suits. Combined with wool, silk, or rayon, modern linens stay crisp—without losing their cool.

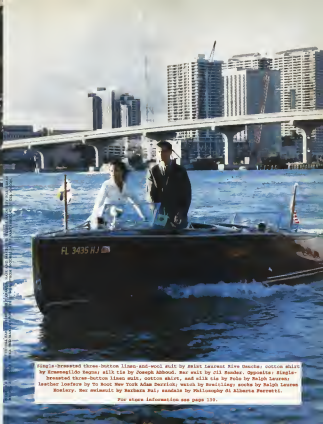
Photographs by Troy Word
Produced by John Mather



Single-breasted two-button linen-and-rayon suit by Calvin Klein. Bar outfit by OMO House
Kasali; shoes by Gianni Versace. Opposite: Double-breasted six-button linen-and-viscose suit
by Testamony; cotton shirt by Peconnick; silk tie
by Baldessarini; Hugo Boss; watch by TWC; leather briefcase by Goldspiral.

Double-breasted side-button pinstripe linen-and-silk suit and cotton shirt by Ermenegildo Zegna; silk tie by H&M; leather shoes by Kenneth Cole; sunglasses by Ray-Ban by Dacot & Lomb. Her outfit by Moncler; shoes by Solvia Klein; pants by DeVucci; sunglasses by Cutiler and Doves. Doves. Double-breasted three-button linen-and-silk suit, cotton shirt, and silk tie by Studio 000.1 by Perre. Her dress by Helen & Gibbons.





Single-breasted three-button linen-and-wool suit by Armani; linen shirt by Ermanno Zegna; silk tie by Joseph Abboud. Mar suit by Jill Sanders. Opposite: Single-breasted three-button linen suit, cotton shirt, and silk tie by Fendi; Ralph Lauren leather loafers by the 1900 New York Adam Sandler; watch by Breitling; socks by Ralph Lauren Hosiery. Mar swimsuit by Barbara Fal; sandals by Philosophy di Alberta Ferretti.

For style information see page 120.

A full-page photograph of five male models standing in a row in what appears to be a workshop or factory setting. They are wearing modern, tailored suits in various colors: dark navy, patterned, light grey, tan, and dark blue. The background shows industrial elements like shelves and tools.

THE MODERNISTS

Designers with a strong modernist look are reshaping men's wear. Here, three who are leading the way.
"The look is basic; my guiding principle, research," says Carol Christian Poell, an Austrian designer.

Photographs by Mandala Pavesi. Produced by Tony Melillo.

CAROL CHRISTIAN POELL
A native of Linz, Austria, and a former designer for Joop men's wear, Poell, twenty-nine, is known for his intricate tailoring and close-fitting silhouettes, which both borrow from the past and point to the future. For example, the fitted black-sylex-and-stretch-Jacquard shirts with flat-front trousers at left suggest the '70s, but the fabrics are indisputably modern. Poell's look combines the basic, like the blue denim and gold wool suits at right, and the slick, like the stretch-cotton suit with a face-embossed shirt to the center.

A full-page photograph of five male models standing in a row in a clothing store. They are all wearing suits. From left to right: the first three models wear dark suits, and the fourth and fifth models wear light-colored suits. They are standing in front of racks of hanging suits. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the models and their clothing. The text is overlaid on the image, following the contours of the models' bodies.

Trim suits for men and women have made Alberto Biani a master of quiet chic. "I try to suggest a style without ostentation," Biani says. "The new stretch fabrics fit perfectly into my remembered silhouettes from films and rock 'n' roll."

ALBERTO BIANI

A Milanese designer with a degree in philosophy, Biani, forty-four, follows suits that are trim, impeccably cut, and ever so hip. A hitzap of stripes, for left, includes a charcoal glencheck suit, white-on-white striped cotton shirt, and charcoal blazer. He wears it. His look is simply elegant, as is the work-and-when-not-in-the-office-or-the-church-and-meeting-as-a-regular-citizen. But it is also sophisticated, glamorous, as is the silver and iridescent black and blue with a black and white pattern.

COSTUME HOMME

BY ENNIO CAPASA

A former assistant to Yohji Yamamoto, Capasa, thirty-six, presented his first Costume Homme collection in Milan in 1993. His clothes sometimes have a raw, unfinished quality that betrays their perfect cut and amazing fabrics. Like the black shirt on the far left, made with an embossed snake-print pattern, or the two shirts to the right of that, made of Mowat rayon lace. His distinctively cut trousers and jackets, evoking the '70s, like the safari-style jacket on the far right, are very much in demand. *Style by* **Barbara Corio**. *Leaders by* **J. M. Weston**.

For store information see page 100.

The Costume Homme label, designed by Ennio Capasa, mixes classic tailoring with the energy of the street. "I like eccentric touches but not too obvious," Capasa says. "I believe in quality—without having to spend a fortune."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHEL COMTE. STYLING BY L. A. MUGGER. MAKEUP BY ROBERT TUCKER. HAIR BY J. M. WESTON. SHIRT: THE PLAZA HOTEL. TROUSERS: THE PLAZA HOTEL. JACKET: THE PLAZA HOTEL. SHIRT: THE PLAZA HOTEL. TROUSERS: THE PLAZA HOTEL. JACKET: THE PLAZA HOTEL.

[continued from page 196] them to meet me inaccurately at this German restaurant across the street from my house.

"Here's the deal, my friends," I say through a mouthful of bratwurst. "We got fifteen slots open in the preschool and three hundred applicants. We got twenty board members making the decision, okay? I want an air war! I want to bombard these fuckers on local cable TV. I want to terrify the survivors with lifelines and thirty-second spots so that it's impossible for a board member or his or her spouse or friends or relatives to watch television for more than ten minutes without having one of our ads in their faces telling them that Gabrielle Leyner belongs in the Denver Cooperative School."

"There's immediate consensus, and it's not long before we're storming the first spot. To Dad, I'm singing "Rip to Me Now," an ode to the mortality of Gabby engaged in various scenarios, spelling words with magnetic letters on a refrigerator, building with blocks, coloring, listening with right ear to a book to read to her, dutifully building a cookie into three equal parts and sharing them with friends. And then, over a still shot of Gabby hugging her dog, the words Gabrielle Leyner Sweet, Sensible, Caring, Generous, Dignified. Not to worry. No one puts your name for the Denver Cooperative School.

"It's nice," I shrug and look up from the storyboard. "It's warm. It's fuzzy. But I don't know. I don't think it's gonna cut it. We gotta go for the throat. I think we gotta go negative. And we gotta go negative hard. Cosmo, if you could distill this selection process down to a single sentence, what would it be?"

"It's aphoristic, contrived, stupid," says Cosmo, spraying sarcasm and spitballs across the table.

"I like your deal, Cos. Sounded earthy."

"I raise my eyebrows in the air. "Let's rock their world."

"So we end up producing and airing this series of shocking, polarizing spots, targeting any toddler we feel poses a significant challenge to Gabby's acceptance."

"In one, for instance, we go after a kid on the aforementioned aphoristic issue. To soothing Brahms interludes for piano, we show a pair of Gabby's

primate *Bushbabe* underparts, under which appear the simple words Gabrielle Leyner and "Then to a jarringly dissonant twelve-note composition by Schoenberg, we show a shaggy diaper, bulging with stool, under which appear the words Zachary Bauer and "The music, cinematography, and tone are spare and compelling, communicating a message that's psychologically potent."

"I pour videotapes of Gabby's second birthday party for increasing footage of other children. We splice together several scenes of a little girl by the name of Ashley Jovanick in which the clings to her mommy, then settles on some boy who'd fatuously laced a ring from the birthday cake, and finally his mother child over the head with a Sky Diver. "We decisively edit out the provocations. The kid had first jabbed Ashley on the stomach with the powdered butt from a Jemmy Gymboree set." Over a still shot of little Ashley looking particularly bloated, we run the words *Ashley Jovanick* Look. Stuck. Thigh. And then in small type at the bottom of the screen, *But for by the Gabrielle Leyner for Preschool Committee*.

"In one spot, we'd tossed a trap by announcing our intentions to make public all of Gabby's pediatric medical records and challenging other parents to do the same. Predictably, several sets of parents declined, citing rights to privacy, confidentiality, or censors."

"We pointed."

"We ran a series of hard-hitting ads featuring a continuous sounding rumble and a booming clang. Nine and 111 football clips to illustrate their daughter's various medical needs. What do they have to hide? Then at bold text across the screen: *Mashed* (Clang) *Mamp* (Clang) *Chicken pie* (Clang) *Hygiene* (Clang) *Compostion* (Clang) *Suicide* (Clang) *Head hurt* (Clang) *Seven Bowls* (Clang) *To Ruby*."

THESE SEVEN TITLES OF THE DENVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL'S nursery selection are broadcast on the local cable network, Metro, Buur, Lake, Cosmo, and I watch from my living room.

"Ashley Jovanick Rejected"
"So! I shoot, checking a name off the roster on my clipboard."
"Lucy McKenna Accepted."
"She."
"Zachary Bauer Rejected."

"Sandra Bushbabe Rejected."
"Gabrielle Leyner Rejected."
"Oh, no!" cries Metro, starts to bar eyes.

"Too indifferent. There's one kid I'm really rooting for: my brother Robert's." And finally, Mrs. Leyner says the archdiocese, pausing for the results to come up on the screen.

"Clay everyone, this is a Start-up."
"Tina Leyner Rejected."
"Sweet!" I yelp, leaping to the air, splicing the remote control between my legs.

"Metro gives me this weeping look, the same look she gave me when I beamed her ninety-one-year-old Beauden grandmother during a July Fourth picnic. Willie ball game. "You just can't give away the taste of the place," I'd said to explain to her."

"None of that had anything to do with Gabby, did it? She's safe, smart and indigenous."

"Meanwhile, you women know what this is all about? Whether you're lashed to the bow of a ship, buffeted by gale winds and sea squalls, shivering your fat as some fuckin' whale who put an your leg or you're chain-smoking in some video studio, doing post-production on a fifteen-second spot designed to assuage the antipathies of some three-year-olds, the bottom line is the same—dominating nature. It's all about who wins, the world out there or you. That's what this was all about."

"Metro shakes her head and leaves the room, muttering ruefully to herself.

"See, the way I look at it, you gotta go out with a winning record. At the end of your life, you tally up all your results, every penicillin game you ever played, every tennis match, golf tournament, office volleyball game, softball or basketball, pool, horseshoot, election bet, lawn, Monopoly, Ping, Mental Kombat, or others, or censors. You tally it all up in the wins and lost columns. "Cause you wanna end up over 500. That's the one guy you want, baby. You gotta finish over 500. Otherwise your soul roams the bars of the cash eternally, looking for other souls to arm-wrestle. You know what I mean?"

"Yep," says the guy in the Nike cap, draining his beer.

I prop my elbow back on the bar, arm averted.

"So... two out of three?" ■

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Patient P.H. Before (above) and After (right) 1745 grafts in one New Hair Institute Fast Track™ session.



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Take a look at patient P.H. in the photographs to the left. Before his NHI Fast Track™ session he had the look of a balding man. Then, after only one session of 1745 grafts, he was on his way; the larger picture shows him 7 months after the one procedure.

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Q&A:

About Hair Transplants

Q
&
A

How do I know if I'm a candidate for hair transplantation?

The only way to know for certain is to meet with a doctor who specializes in hair transplantation, but it's safe to say that most men who suffer from male pattern baldness are candidates for this procedure.

Q
&
A

Why will the transplanted hair grow in the same areas where the old hair died?

It is important to understand that there is nothing wrong with the scalp in the balding areas. The problem lies in the actual hair follicles which were genetically programmed to die. The hairs on the back of your head are "permanent" hairs and will grow for the rest of your life in the new location.

Q
&
A

How do I know which doctor to choose?

We suggest you always look for:

1. A doctor who specializes in hair transplant procedures full time.
2. A doctor who uses the smallest grafts possible (1-3 hairs).
3. A doctor who can complete the restoration in the fewest number of procedures, by placing large numbers of tiny grafts in each procedure. It should require no more than 1 or 2 visits.
4. A doctor who is willing and proud to introduce you to his patients, who are, in turn, proud to be seen.
5. A Medical Group that is a recognized leader in hair restoration techniques.

The Thrall of Victory

HOW A BOY manages to embrace a vicious smear campaign against a bunch of innocent three-year-olds? asks the guy in a Nike cap seated next to me at the bar.

"See, my daughter, Gabriela, she'll be three in June, was applying for enrollment in the Damen Cooperative School's nursery program. We had her interview scheduled, and my wife, Mera, was waiting anxiously on the four essay questions included in the application. Why wasn't I working industriously on the essay questions? I'm the winner, right? Well, I can't write that kind of stuff. Any governmental, legal, or bureaucratic writing of any sort that I attempt ends up sounding like Prozac channeled through Fanny Shone: this wretched hybrid that's simultaneously gaudy and pathetic. Better Mera. Also, to be honest, I wasn't really into it. I didn't have particularly passionate feelings about whether Gabi went to preschool or not. And, anyway, I had things to do. Like, there was a UNCO-Duke game I had to watch.

"So, this particular night, the phone rings. It's Larbara, my date-wound-alien-affiliate brother Lobern's wife. She wants Mera and me to hear the essays she wrote for her three-year-old daughter Tina's application to the Damen Cooperative School. I'm about to put Mera on another line so we can both listen to and presumably 'constructively criticize' Larbara's essays when I come to my senses. There are apparently some three hundred kids applying for fifteen coveted spots in the preschool. That's competition, baby.

"Larbara, you are one goddamn meanie why we should help you." I snarl, surprising myself with this sudden vehemence about an issue toward which, until a moment ago, I'd been distinctly apathetic. "Tina's a cute kid, Larb, she's my niece, but, hey, she's vying for my daughter's spot. She's the enemy."

"Larbara hangs up, and I try returning to the Tie Dye and Blue Devils. But I'm too agitated to sit still. I'm psyched, I'm pacing the living room. And you know what? It's got absolutely nothing to do with preschool. It's the competition, baby! I love that shit. Mera's name. No quarter asked, none given. For all the marbles. One of



It's the competition, baby! Nothing feels as good as organic campaigning.

us leaves the coliseum with a mythic-sounding, bespangled slave girl on each arm, one of us remains behind with the 67 student re-dictionary.

"See, that's what I hate about my profession," I say to the guy who's firing up a Camel. "There's no real competition in the belles lettres industry. It's art. There are no winners or losers. No casualties. I hate that. The last people to really wield literature and competition were the ancient Greeks. Legend has it that Anachlyas, when he won first prize at the egg v.c. Greater Dionysia for *The Liberos Recens*, insistently spiked his papyrus manuscripts between his legs and did this swirling dance under the Acropolis that resulted in a fine of something like twenty-five hundred drachmas. That's when literature was a real sport.

"See, that's why when I realized this preschool thing afforded me the opportunity to vanquish some opponents, I got so turned on.

"So I call two media advisers I know—Rusty Hoover and Luke Bur-wend, a demographics crankshaft and pollster known as Camille the Baker and tell [continued on page 124]

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